

JOURNAL *of* COMPARATIVE LITERATURE *and* AESTHETICS

Volume 44

| Number 1

| Spring 2021

*In Loving Memory of
Prof. Sushil K. Saxena (1921-2013)
on his Birth Centenary*

ISSN 0252-8169

A Vishvanatha Kaviraja Institute Publication

Founding Editor: A. C. Sukla

Founding Editor
Ananta Charan Sukla
Vishvanatha Kaviraja Institute

Editor
Parul Dave-Mukherji
Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU)

EDITORIAL BOARD

W. J. T. Mitchell	University of Chicago
Peter Lamarque	University of York
Terry Eagleton	Lancaster University
Charles Altieri	UC Berkeley
Jonathan Culler	Cornell University
Robert Stecker	Central Michigan University
Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht	Stanford University
Noël Carroll	The City University of New York
Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak	Columbia University
Martha C. Nussbaum	The University of Chicago
Sheldon Pollock	Columbia University
Stephen Halliwell	University of St Andrews
George E. Rowe	University of Oregon
Stephen Davies	University of Auckland
John Hyman	Queen's College
Meir Sternberg	Tel Aviv University
Roger T. Ames	Peking University
Zhang Longxi	City University of Hong Kong
Susan L. Feagin	Temple University
Rita Felski	University of Virginia
Garry L. Hagberg	Bard College
Arindam Chakrabarti	Stony Brook University
Peter E. Gordon	Harvard University

Cover Artwork and Typesetting: Bhaktahari Dash
Printed at Print-tech Offset Pvt. Ltd., Bhubaneswar, India

All editorial communications and papers or reviews for favour of publication in the journal are to be mailed to jlclaindia@gmail.com. All rights reserved. No portion of this journal is allowed to be reproduced by any process or technique, without the formal consent of the Institute.

© 2021 Vishvanatha Kaviraja Institute
HIG A-42, Sector-7, CDA, Cuttack - 753 014, India



Vishvanatha Kaviraja Institute

Journal of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics

Volume 44

| Number 1

| Spring 2021

In Loving Memory of Prof. Sushil K. Saxena (1921-2013) on his Birth Centenary

ARTICLES

David Fenner

Reading Ritualized Space

1

Michel Dion

George Eliot and Marcel Proust: The Religious Feeling and the Paradoxical Temporality

12

Max Ryyänen

Learning from Dr. Dre: Teaching Aesthetics and Art Theory to Artists

27

Ryan Mitchell Wittingslow

The Play's *das* Thing: On the Incommensurability of Arendtian Political Action and the Kantian Sublime

34

Oindri Roy

Bridging the Gaps: Towards a New Paradigmatic Interface of Translation Studies and Comparative Literature

44

Yue Wang

In Search of Humanity: A Bakhtinian Dialogic Study of *The Sound and the Fury*

57

Sangeetha Puthiyedath & Sreedharan T.

Aesthetics and Ethics: Convergence and Divergence in Plato and Aristotle

71

Bowen Wang

Demystification of the "Innocent Eye": Nelson Goodman, Ernst H. Gombrich, and the Limitation of Conventionalism

81

Muskaan Kapoor

The Present-Day Medusa: Foregrounding L'écriture Feminism in the Contemporary Retellings of Mythology

89

Wang Chutong

What Does It All Mean? An Approach to Aesthetics of Ancient Chinese Poetry

98

Tingwen Xu

Right to Untranslatability and Hospitality of World Literature

110

Mridula Sharma	
Revisiting Bernard Rose's <i>Frankenstein</i> : Ugliness and Exclusion	120
Yuying Liang	
The Production of Space and Representation of Culture: A Case Study of the Opening Ceremony of Beijing Olympics	128
Prashant Kumar	
Reimagining the Notion of Imagination: A Kantian Perspective	144
Monica Choudhary	
Is it Easy to Forget Allama Iqbal? A Search for Progressive Religion and Recrudescence of Reason	151
Catarina Pombo Nabais	
The Museum Today: Towards a Participatory and Emancipated Heterology	157
José L. Fernández	
Hugo, Hegel, and Architecture	168
Mukulika Dattagupta	
Weaving Cityscapes with Oral Narratives: A Study of Select Travel Narratives by Biswanath Ghosh	179
Anwasha Sahoo	
Interpreting 'madwomen': A Study of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" and Pratibha Ray's "The Eyes"	187
NOTES AND DISCUSSION	
Oguz Tecimen	
Auerbach, Tanpinar and Edib in Istanbul: Reinventing the Humanities and Comparative Literature (An Interview with Efe Khayyat)	195
BOOK REVIEWS	
Muralikrishnan T.R.	
<i>Joan of Arc on the Stage and Her Sisters in Sublime Sanctity</i> (Bernard Shaw and His Contemporaries). By John Pendergast	207
Ritushree Sengupta	
<i>Women Writers of the South Asian Diaspora: Interpreting Gender, Texts and Contexts.</i> By Ajay K. Chaubey and Shilpa Daithota Bhat	210
Shouvik Narayan Hore	
<i>K. B. Goel: Critical Writings on Art 1957-1998.</i> By Shruti Parthasarathy (Ed.)	213
Oindrila Ghosh	
<i>The Death Script: Dreams and Delusions in Naxal Country.</i> By Ashutosh Bhardwaj	214
Anwasha Sahoo	
<i>Exploring Gender Diversity in the Ancient World.</i> By Allison Surtees and Jennifer Dyer	217
Samuel Bendeck Sotillos	
<i>A Living Islamic City: Fez and Its Preservation.</i> By Titus Burckhardt, Jean-Louis Michon & Joseph A. Fitzgerald (Eds.). Jane Casewit (Trans.)	219
Samuel Bendeck Sotillos	
<i>The Unhindered Path: Ruminations on Shin Buddhism.</i> By John Paraskevopoulos	222

Reading Ritualized Space

DAVID E. FENNER

Abstract

Scholars from various disciplines think of “ritual” as performatives that serve to set apart some events from other events. The spatial settings of rituals not only are constructed deliberately through the application of aesthetic sensibilities but they can be “read” or interpreted through aesthetic means. Persons responsible for constructing the ritual’s settings include and exclude items, and arrange the setting’s *mise en scene*, specifically to enhance the aesthetic character of the setting, to contribute to the aesthetic experience of those who are participating or observing the ritual, and to increase the aesthetic worth of both the event and the experience of it. This paper is about how to interpret and appreciate that “stage-setting.”

Reading Ritualized Space

Scholars from various disciplines think of “ritual” as performatives that serve to set apart some events from other events – and in setting them apart imbue them with special significance and, normally, special importance. This paper is about the settings of such events and relevant aesthetic considerations. Though on occasion one might think of the setting of a ritual as integral to the central performative(s), and on that basis think of this as a paper about ritual, given that the performatives are not what we will explore, perhaps it is best to think of this paper rather as just about the contexts – the spatial contexts – for rituals.

When discussing film theory, it is common for those analyzing film form to break the concept into various parts, one of which is the contents of the visual field. This is called the *mise en scene*, and it includes everything that is within that visual field: the settings, the props, how deep the field is and how many planes are involved in constituting that depth, and even the actors, their costumes, their makeup, and sometimes even their behaviors. (It does not include the photographic aspects; that’s something else.) What we can see in film we can also easily see in theater plays, in opera, in dance, and an argument might be made for the symphony as well. This paper is about *mise en scene* — not the *mise en scene* of works of art but rather of rituals.

My thesis is that the spatial settings of rituals, thought of in the broadest possible terms and along a continuum from the most grand to the most modest, not only are constructed deliberately through the application of aesthetic sensibilities but they can be “read” or interpreted through aesthetic means. Certainly this is a case of form following function, and the primary motivation of constructing ritual settings is to support, foster, and enhance the ritual in terms of its functions and goals, but how this is done, I believe,

is through aesthetic means. By “application of aesthetic sensibilities” and “aesthetic means,” I mean that those persons responsible for constructing the ritual’s settings include and exclude items, and arrange the setting’s *mise en scene*, specifically to enhance the aesthetic character of the setting, to contribute to the aesthetic experience of those who are participating or observing the ritual, and to increase the aesthetic worth of both the event and the experience of it. This paper is about how to interpret and appreciate that “stage-setting.”

Ritualized Space

Let’s begin with some examples. There are a virtually infinite number of rituals; the list below is meant to illustrate some of the most common as well as illustrating a spectral continuity of grand to modest.

- *A Coronation.* In 1953, Elizabeth II was crowned Queen Regnant of the United Kingdom and parts of the Commonwealth. The coronation was the first that was televised, and audiences around the world watched as Elizabeth, in Westminster Abbey, was crowned. The spectacle was likely the grandest that anyone watching may have seen or perhaps may ever see in terms of the setting of the Abbey, those present and their attire, and especially those participating and their attire. One might argue that the coronation was an event that stretched from Buckingham Palace to the Abbey, but whether the setting was just the Abbey or the Abbey and a particular (not lengthy) stretch of London, it is easy to think about the setting as bounded in space.
- *A Wedding.* Whether a wedding is conducted before a church’s altar, under a chuppah in a synagogue, or while taking seven steps around a fire in India, settings, decorations, and the attire of the bride and groom (supposing that sort of wedding) as well as family members and attendants are all special to the ritual.
- *A Religious Worship Event.* Temples and other houses of worship are special places, imbued with special symbols, overseen by ritual experts in special garb, and attended by others who often wear special garb as well.
- *A Graduation.* Even when a university graduation is held in a school’s basketball arena, the space is made special by those participating and those attending. Academic attire in the European style is odd – the sleeves on gowns are odd, square caps are odd, hoods are odd – but the oddness of the attire signals that the ritual of graduation has a special significance that connects to traditions hundreds of years old.
- *A Birthday.* Balloons, streamers, banners, a cake with candles, and a pinata all contribute to transforming an ordinary room or back garden into a space for remembering the anniversary of one’s entry into the world.
- *A Holiday Event.* A home well cleaned and decorated with *diyas* and *rangolis*, inhabited by family members wearing special clothes, sets the traditional context for the five days of Diwali.
- *A Dinner Party.* In an iconic middle-class American fashion, a dining room is opened; a table not used for everyday meals is decorated with linens, plates, glasses, flatware, flowers and candles; lamps that are infrequently used are lit; hosts dress up and await guests who bring bottles of wine.

In all these cases, “stages” are set to provide contexts for rituals. Consider perhaps the most modest of all ritual-focused stage-settings: when one first moves into a new space – a first room, a first apartment, a first house – job one is to make sure the space will function properly. One needs furnishing, and a list of the basics is drawn up: bed, chair, table, etc. The second job is to make certain that the space, that the items on the list of basics that will inhabit the space, are comfortable. The third job – and this is where we come in – is for the new occupant to ensure that, to the extent that resources of time, talent, and treasure will allow, the space reflects an aesthetic taste to which the new occupant aspires. What color will the walls be? What colors will the sofa and curtains and rugs be? How will objects be arranged? What will decorate the walls? What will be the style of the dishes and flatware? It is only after these matters of necessity, comfort, and aesthetics are decided that one begins to plan excursions to IKEA or wherever the objects to be purchased presently reside.

It is intuitive to think that the daily task of simply living is not a ritual, and that setting up a first living space is not the creation of a setting for ritual, but there are definitely elements of ritualization that are relevant here. First, the living space, by its very nature, is set apart from the outside world and the living spaces of others. Second and more importantly, the living space very likely will be the setting of future rituals, grand and modest, and so getting a basic palette, a basic *mise en scene*, in place as a working backdrop for those future events is important. On the list above I included “the dinner party.” This is a common modestly ritualized event that takes as its backdrop one’s ordinary living environment – but these environments are transformed, sometimes simply, sometimes elaborately, for the event. In addition, special manners of dress and comportment may be employed. The goal of this ritual – if we can think of a dinner party as a kind of modest ritual – may be thought of in a variety of ways (fun, social bonding, career enhancement, and so forth), but the event bears a set of aesthetic markers and an aesthetic character that is repeated across such events within a culture or a region. Dinner parties are but one ritual performed in one’s living space, but that living space, as simple as it may be, will normally be arranged and decorated to allow for easy transformation for special occasions like holidays, birthdays, and dinner parties.

Interpreting a Ritualized Space

Interpretation of art objects and events incorporates a variety of different activities, and these activities are theoretically and practically approached in a variety of different ways. In this section, let’s briefly review the matter so we may proceed with applying it later in the paper.

The work of artistic interpretation seems to consist in three things: discovery of meaning, bridging the descriptive and the evaluative, and working out the logic of the formal relationships among the elements of the work of art.¹ These items easily transfer to the interpretation of ritualized space.

By “discovery of meaning” I mean that part of the work of interpretation deals with understanding, and this work of understanding is akin to translation from an unknown language into a known one. If a speaker of a language I do not understand uses a phrase I wish to understand, a translation must be made. This language-translation metaphor can only go so far, but the goal with both language-translation and interpretation of a work of art is understanding: “what does this art object mean?”

By “bridging the descriptive and the evaluative” I mean that while works of art come with properties that are perceptual or, in the case of literature, arise from the linguistic meaning of what is perceptual – all that we are likely to call “objective” – the ascription of aesthetic properties to the object are made only through the application of taste² and this necessarily adds value or valuing to what is “objective.” That is, aesthetic properties are bearers of value; we use them to speak of a work’s artistic virtues and faults; we use them as evidence of our judgments of a work’s artistic value. The movement from the purely objective – say, the lines and colors of painting – to the judgment that the composition is balanced, elegant, or harmonious is a movement from the descriptive to the evaluative. This application of taste in order to achieve ascriptions of aesthetic properties is an interpretative project. The audience member must interpret the objective properties as underwriting value-carrying aesthetic or artistic properties.

By “working out the logic of the formal relations” within a work of art, I mean that the audience member, as yet another instance of interpretive work, must consider how the various aspects of the object fit together, puzzle-like, into a single coherent whole that exhibits an internal integrity that some (like Clive Bell³ and Suzanne Langer⁴) have described as significant form. I invoked “film form” earlier in talking about *mise en scene*. Let me invoke it again by saying that if film form consists of a film’s *mise en scene*, its photographic aspects (cinematography), its narrative, its sound elements, and its editing style, it is up to the viewer of the film to determine either or both of the meaning of the film and the quality of the film through consideration of how those aspects fit together into a unified coherent whole. This is the structure, form, or logic of the work of art.

How these projects are carried out differs on the approach one takes toward interpretation. For the sake of brevity, let’s take a lofty view and consider just six large scale approaches.

- One should avoid interpretation. This is the position of Susan Sontag who argues that especially recently both the world of art as objects/events and the world of audience members and critics have emphasized approaches to art and the consideration of art that have privileged cognitive engagement to the exclusion of engagement characterized as emotional or spiritual or even purely aesthetic in the sense of simple sensory appreciation of the properties of objects. Cognitive engagement is only one sort available, but an over-focus on interpretative engagement with art objects can over-emphasize this sort of engagement. The answer: let the art speak as it will and do not force a reduction to mere cognitive appreciation. One way to concretize this approach: avoid interpretation.⁵
- One should focus on the intentions of the artist. The most famous proponent of this view is E. D. Hirsch. He argues that within each art object is both a set of rules that govern the meaning of that work and the “data” (the aesthetic properties and features) that allow application of those rules. Where there is ambiguity in either figuring out those data or the rules that are meant to govern discovery of their meaning, one should appeal to the artist and her stated intentions concerning what she meant to convey. This is how communication works intuitively; when one speaks to us, we are keen to understand what she means by the words she uses, and if there are misunderstandings, we appeal to the speaker to clarify what she meant.⁶
- One should focus strictly on the object itself. William Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley famously argued that artist intention is irrelevant to understanding the meaning of a

work of art. Like Hirsch, they believed that works of art carry within them elements that allow for interpretation in the same way that words on a page carry meanings. If we know the language, we know the meanings not only of the words but of the entirely literary work; the same goes for any work of art.⁷ One need not appeal to anything external to the object to understand its meaning; the object alone is sufficient for that so long as the audience member attending to it knows how to “read” it.

- If there are, as a matter of fact, a plurality of possible interpretations of a given art object, one should focus on that interpretation (or those interpretations) that enhance the value of the experience of the work.⁸ While an ideal might be described where each art object possesses only one possible interpretation, the likelihood is rather than a given work will inspire a plurality of different interpretations. Those that enhances audience members’ experience of the work, that enhance the value of the art object or enhance the experience of the object, are those that are deemed legitimate.
- Stanley Fish is likely the best known of those theorists who argue that works of art do not carry within themselves enough that establish their meanings in settled ways.⁹ The same word, sentence, paragraph or whole literary work may mean very different things to different people. Fish is known for saying that it is specific schools of interpretation, specific interpretative communities, who offer interpretations that are legitimate. As there are a plurality of such communities, so there will be a plurality of legitimate interpretations – and the more communities, the more legitimate interpretations. These interpretative communities can include all sorts of different perspectives: Marxist Socialist-Realism, Freudianism, Jungianism, Critical Race Theory, Feminism, Queer Theory, and so forth.
- At the furthest end of the spectrum are those who believe that interpretations are matters of individual engagement with art objects and who believe that so long as the individual interpreter finds her interpretation meaningful and revelatory, there should be no interference with that. There should be no suggestion that one should settle for a more formalized or restrictive view – one that might actually diminish for the particular viewer the quality of her engagement with the work. If the goal is the enhancement of the individual art experience, then any interpretation, no matter its content or how it was derived, is legitimate if indeed the individual experiencer finds it useful or insightful or otherwise valuable. This sort of interpretation can carry within it personal associations and personal identifications with the work; these cannot be adopted experientially by any audience larger than the person having the experience.

This brief review is about what it means to “read” an art object; we will return below to discussing its application to ritualized spaces.

The Aesthetic Form of a Ritualized Space

At the start of the paper and once more just above I invoked the notion of *mise en scene* as an element of film form. Removing the notion from film form and applying it to ritualized space provides us with a framework for understanding the elements of the aesthetic form (or structure or logic) of the ritualized space. Below are discussed nine elements of that form.

The Perspective of the Participants. Participants in a ritual have a specific place or set of specific places they occupy as part of the ritual. In a traditional Hindu wedding, the

bridge and groom take seven steps around a ritual fire. As they do, they occupy seven different positions, and they have seven different perspectives of the space they occupy. Those different perspectives will render different visual phenomena for the bride and groom; in occupying different spaces and in seeing the space from different vantage points, their visual perspectives alter and so their registration of their occupation of the space alters. Each perspective is a separate uptake of the aesthetic form of the space. Perspective is important as the location we occupy within a space constructs that space differently for us; we understand the space differently with different perspectives. This is important to understanding and appreciating its aesthetic character and virtues.

The Perspective of the Observers. It is common in many rituals to have a set of people who are merely observing and not participating. Their positions are usually fixed. They take their seats or their places at the start of the ritual and they tend to stay there for the duration – not always of course but commonly. So their perspectives will be fixed (or largely so) as well. Furthermore, as they are not participants, their perspective is likely to be of a wider field and from a more distanced vantage point than the participants. That farther-away, wider-field perspective is important to get just right, as one aesthetically constructs the space, as it changes so little and takes in so much.

The Depth of Field. Each time I visit Westminster Abbey, I find myself seated within the center of the cruciform structure. No matter how many times I visit, I cannot help but let my eyes wander higher and higher along the rising architecture. The depth of field for those European medievals who designed and created the space was important; it had symbolic significance in referencing the expansiveness and greatness of the divine. The same depth of field is present when one looks from the doorway to the Abbey through to the altar (which can only be seen ideally as there is a massive screen in the midst and the space is immense). Not all ritualized spaces are as grand or are meant to be; some are meant to be small and intimate. Consider a Native American sweat lodge, where the canopy is just large enough to contain the inhabitants and the fire in the center. Intimacy and closeness are important there, and so “depth of field” should not always be taken as encouragement of massive space. Sometimes the opposite is true.

The Enclosure. Most ritualized spaces will be enclosed in obvious ways, with walls that define the space and limit the visual expanse. This is not always the case, but it does seem always the case that even when the space is not obviously enclosed it is nonetheless bounded according to a human scale – that is, according to an aesthetical sensibility that accords to how humans define “a space.” Take for instance a Christian baptism that is done outside in a lake or a river. Here one might argue that there is no enclosure – and there is not – but the space is still bounded. It is either the space of the lake, or it is a subset of that space that has been “adopted” as a sacred space for the ritual to take place. It has a special importance or significance, and so it cannot then extend out indefinitely. It must be bounded according to its ritualized purpose.

The Items Present. Every ritualized space will have objects within it whose inclusion is understood to be purposeful and deliberate. They may only be present to define the space, but most times they are present as symbols and instruments of meaning. A birthday party may have balloons, streamers and a cake – all of which not only enhance but focus the activity on celebration of an enthusiastic and upbeat nature.

The Items Used. Not every ritual makes use of objects but many do. Not only are these objects bearers of aesthetic value, how they are used – the manner in which the performance of the ritual is carried out – is also an aesthetic matter.

The Auditory. Film theory makes a distinction between “diegetic” and “non-diegetic” sound. “Diegetic” refers to all those elements that are part of the film’s world – in other words, that would be real if the film world were real. “Non-diegetic,” particularly in reference to sounds like music, refers to sounds that are not part of the world of the film but that nonetheless are heard by the audience. It is common for a musical score that assists in the creation of mood, focus, and other values to be employed in a film. This filmic distinction again is useful when it comes to ritualized space, and even though sound *per se* is not a part of a film’s *mise en scene*, we can still think of it as part of the aesthetic fabric that constitutes the contextual setting of a ritual. It is difficult to imagine a ritual that does not incorporate sound of some sort.

The Olfactory. The fire in a Hindu wedding has a distinctive smell. The incense in a Roman Catholic mass has a distinctive smell. Even the peppermint smell of the candy cane that is handed out by the Santa Claus at the American Mall – if such a visit has a ritualistic quality – can form part of the indelible atmosphere of such an event.

The Taste. Many rituals incorporate consumables like food and drink. Again the Roman Catholic mass comes to mind, and the stereotypical taste of the somewhat watered-down sweet wine, along with the papery texture of the eucharistic host (the wafer), are aesthetic matters. Generally when it comes to taste, we call these aesthetic components “gustatory,” but that suggests “good” and “bad” tastes. Here, especially given the Roman Catholic example, I simply mean any taste.

It may well be that there are more than nine aspects to the aesthetic form of the setting of a ritual, and ideally this list should be comprehensive. It is through analyzing the setting of a ritual in terms of its form that we can interpret – that we can “read” – that aesthetic form. The reason why such a “read” is important is that through such an interpretative project, we can appreciate not only the aesthetics of the setting *per se* but we can see how the setting’s aesthetic elements work together toward the success of the ritual, to the quality of the efficacy of the ritual. Or how they fail to – which is to say that “reading” the aesthetic setting allows us also to build the case for evaluating it, for determining whether it is sufficient or exemplary or whether it fails.

In all the approaches to interpretation that are sketched above, there is an element of the normative. The facilitation of understanding, of achieving meaning and/or communication, is a value. But some of the approaches sketched above go well beyond this in emphasizing value-focused goals for interpretation – goals that are largely cashed out in terms of the quality of the experience one has in attending to the art object under consideration.

When discussing above the generalities of interpretation, I mentioned “significant form” as a name that at least two art theorists used as they attempted to capture the internal integrity of an aesthetic object. That “internal integrity” – how the pieces of the aesthetic puzzle fit together to create a seamless organic whole, one that demonstrates maximum coherence among all its various aspects – goes by several names, “significant form” being only one. This same aesthetic character likely was at the heart of what Immanuel Kant

understood as the “purposeless purposiveness,” the character of an object that, while it serves no instrumental function *per se*, still has a quality that strikes the one attending to it as purposeful and purposive.¹⁰ John Dewey, who we will talk about once more at the end of this paper, describes experiences that have maximal aesthetic quality – each of which he refers to as “*an* experience” – as having the same internal coherence, as being bounded and having a recognizable beginning, middle, and end (what I would call a “narrative arc”).¹¹ All of these approaches and likely many more focus on the experiential registration by the audience member of the puzzle-like quality of aesthetic objects when all the pieces lock in and the puzzle is revealed. The project of working this out, as I mentioned above, is one of the key ways of understanding the nature of interpretation.

Through an analyzed form of the setting of a ritual – toward which the list above means to present a start – we can know the puzzle pieces. Once we know the puzzle pieces, we can begin the task of considering their individual character, but even more importantly we can see how the puzzle pieces go together to form whatever degree of coherence they all together form. This allows us to evaluate that aesthetic setting, but more importantly it allows us to understand it and to understand how it contributes to the ritual meeting its goals as a ritual. And this leads us to the next section of the paper.

The Goals of a Ritualized Space

Why do we engage in these aesthetically-focused “stage-setting” exercises? The answer to this question can be expressed in a single word: focus. But in asking “focus on what?” we occasion an opportunity to unpack the answer.

- First and foremost, the setting must enhance focus on the significant performatives of the ritual as well as the overall function or goal of the ritual. The setting must focus attention on the ritual as ritual. This was mentioned toward the top of the paper.
- Second, the setting must assist in emphasizing the “set-apart” nature of not only the ritual and those participating in the ritual but also the space in which the ritual is performed. The setting must be bounded in space (and in time) on a human scale, so that anyone appreciating the setting will appreciate its boundaries and “set-apart” nature.
- Third, the setting must focus attention by psychically bracketing off the ritual from the ordinary, from daily worries and distractions. Whether inspiring of calm or of gregariousness, the setting must focus attention “on” and “away from.”
- Fourth, the setting must invite the appropriate behaviors for those performing, those participating in, and those observing the ritual. Voices are modulated (lowered or raised) appropriately; respect is demonstrated; *esprit de corps* is demonstrated.
- Fifth, the setting must uplift the mood and elevate the spirit. It must feel special; it must make one feel honored and eager to do honor.
- Sixth, the setting must convey to all present the value of the ritual and the time and effort spent on the ritual.

What do we mean to achieve in concentrating focus? I want to suggest a slate of six goals that the aesthetic character of the ritual’s setting contribute to meeting. Before going into these, though, I need to point out two things. First, not all rituals have the same goals, no

matter how generalized the goals may be articulated; so no list that represents itself as expressing necessary and/or sufficient conditions for an event being a ritual, or for a ritual to be a successful ritual, is likely to be successful. Second, part of the (non-physical) context of a ritual is its cultural setting; we are not discussing this aspect of the context of rituals in this paper, but as rituals are necessarily set in cultures, so their goals are as well. And, furthermore, their aesthetic virtues must be understood as necessarily set within a cultural context as well. As the aesthetic property of “balance” differs significantly between European Renaissance paintings and Japanese Ikebana, so all the aesthetic aspects of ritual settings may only be fully understood within their cultural contexts – and for some rituals their historical, regional, religious (and so forth) contexts as well. The value of creating a list of goals is to help us organize our thinking about what the aesthetic features of a ritual’s setting contribute to that ritual, but any more ambition than that may be disappointing.

Expressing Culture. As all rituals are culturally bound, it seems to follow that we can gain insights into the culture of which the ritual is a part through considering its setting. The aesthetic features of those settings express their cultural contexts, and to the degree to which a culture is expressed in a ritual, we can appreciate that culture all the more. This is a circuit. As we appreciate the cultural context, we can appreciate the significance of a particular ritual and its components all the more, as well. A ritual that might seem strange to one from outside that ritual’s culture, with the education that comes through understanding the particular cultural context of that ritual, may be illuminated for that spectator. And in turn that spectator may appreciate that culture in ways that are new and revelatory.

Continuity with Tradition. While this paper is not engaging with contextual matters beyond the aesthetics of a ritual’s setting, the reality is that the aesthetic elements of that setting will cast light back on the traditions and history of that ritual. This is cross-fertilizing insofar as analyzing the aesthetics of the settings will illuminate other contextualities relevant to the ritual.

Establishment of the Sacred. I have been fairly careful to talk about rituals rather than talking about the sacred. The reason is that while I see no reason to think that a ritual cannot be private and individual, most are not. Most are communal. “Ritual” is a name for a class of events, but “the sacred” is not. “The sacred” is an attitudinal state of an individual or group for a thing, a place, or an event; it is usually an attitudinal state characterized by holding that thing, place, event as possessing a special value. So it is cleaner and safer for me to talk simply about rituals. That said, the aesthetic aspects of the setting of a ritual through defining a certain space and a certain time as “set-apart” allows us to see a mechanism through which one may come to regard that ritual or its space or its time as possessing the special value that commonly accompanies a thing, place, or event identified as being sacred.

Signaling A New Navigation of the Reality of the Ritual. When one is an observer or a participant in a ritual, it is common for one to behaviorally comport oneself in a manner fitting taking on that role in a ritual. The same is true for dress. The reality of the everyday and the ordinary gives way to a new reality, the reality of the ritual, and the respect that the ritual commands – again whether that respect is characterized by serenity or by boisterousness – is integral to that new reality. Observers and participants,

in entering the new world of the ritual, act and dress in ways consonant with that new world and its expectations and rules. The aesthetic aspects of the setting not only encourage recognition that one has entered a new world, they also suggest and signal the character of that new world and the logic and rules that govern it.

Reinforcing Community. As I just mentioned, I have no reason to think a private ritual is impossible, but most rituals connect to histories and traditions than transcend the individual and put us in contact with others, both past and present. As we are connected with others, our sense of being in community and the importance of being in community is enhanced. Just as in the case with the item directly above, an aesthetic consideration of the setting, through the fact that this establishes the boundaries in time and space of that ritual, makes us aware of the boundaries of that community and this in turn makes us aware of our place in it and our particular connections to those within it.

Reordering Hierarchy. Finally, many rituals reorder the roles and functions of those participating in them. A wedding for instance places both the bride and groom in a new position *vis a vis* their families. It is not surprising that English royals have titles bestowed on them only at the point of their marriages; the marriage concretizes and symbolizes their new position, which in turn is further concretized and symbolized through the conferral of a new title. What happens explicitly in this rarified case happens emblematically, though perhaps subtly, through all marriages at the point of the wedding. We see the emblematic nature of this change aesthetically, through the clothes the bride and groom are wearing, to where they are located during the ritual, to how they are the focus of all eyes during the ritual. What happens in a wedding happens in many other rituals; positional change is not only achieved through the ritual but the trappings of this change are expressed, usually very clearly, through the aesthetics.

Conclusion

Every ritual, as a matter of metaphysical reality, has a context. In addition to histories, traditions, associations and other contextual matters, each ritual has a physical context, a setting. That setting can be read and understood in terms of its aesthetic form. It can not only be interpreted, which is the primary focus of this paper, but it can be evaluated in terms of its efficacy at bringing focus to the central performative goals of the ritual. Understanding and evaluating the aesthetic aspects of a ritual's context may seem a project in over-intellectualizing events that are common to our everyday lives, but the significance of these intellectualized projects is to gain a deeper insight into the nature of these everyday events. That is, in understanding their contexts, we can understand more deeply how they function in our lives, why they are important to us, how they achieve their defining goal of setting apart some events from others and imbuing those set-apart events with special importance and significance.

There are additional lessons to learn as well.

I stated above that I would mention the work of John Dewey again. Dewey believed that every event we experience has something of the aesthetic about it. He said that an event that is maximally aesthetic – has the most of this aesthetic quality – we call, as I mentioned, “an event” and he described this aesthetic character in the way I briefly sketched above. Dewey's view that all events are on an aesthetic spectrum fits nicely the fact that rituals can be common everyday events but they are still, by their nature, “set-

apart." The way Dewey characterizes the aesthetic is a means for us to approach and consider what assists in making these events both "continuous-with" and "set-apart-from" the ordinary and everyday.

If we can indeed read through aesthetical analysis the settings of rituals and can gain deeper insight into the nature of those particular rituals and ritual as a general kind of event, then we can, in complement, also gain, through considering these matters, deeper insight into the nature and importance of analyzing all settings in aesthetic terms. That is, if through unpacking the aesthetic form of a ritual's setting we gain insight into that ritual, we also gain insight into the nature of all settings as being analyzable and understandable through aesthetic analysis. All physical staging can be thought about in aesthetic terms, and very likely projects of this sort will lead to meaningful insights. The enhancement of our facility for such analysis likely will contribute to understanding all human events more deeply.

University of North Florida, USA

Notes

¹ XXXXXXXXXXXX, "Mapping Approaches to Interpretation," *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, forthcoming.

² Frank Sibley, "Aesthetic Concepts," *Philosophical Review* 68:4 (1959), 421-450.

³ Clive Bell, *Art* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1914).

⁴ Suzanne Langer, *Feeling and Form* (New York: Scribner, 1953).

⁵ Susan Sontag, "Against Interpretation," in *Against Interpretation* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1966).

⁶ E. D. Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation* (Yale University Press, 1967).

⁷ William K. Wimsatt and Monroe C. Beardsley, "The Intentional Fallacy," *Sewanee Review* 54 (1946), 468-488.

⁸ Alan Goldman, "Interpreting Art and Literature," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 48:3 (1990), 205-214, and Alan Goldman, *Philosophy and the Novel* (Oxford University Press, 2013).

⁹ Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class?* (Harvard University Press, 1980).

¹⁰ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987).

¹¹ John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York: Perigee, 1934).

George Eliot and Marcel Proust: The Religious Feeling and the Paradoxical Temporality

MICHEL DION

From a philosophical and literary viewpoint, George Eliot (1819-1880) and Marcel Proust (1871-1922) have not been influenced by the same philosophers and writers. However, Proust was fascinated by Eliot's realistic novels. Eliot lived in the Victorian period. Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu* was mainly published from 1913 to 1927 (five years after Proust's death). Proust lived during the First World War and was aware of the beginnings of the "Roaring Twenties". Eliot and Proust did not belong to the same literary period. Eliot was close to Romanticism, while Proust was the most important representative of the "stream of consciousness" literary technique (the other main representatives included Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, Joseph Conrad, and Henry James). Nonetheless, Eliot and Proust shared some concerns for love and happiness. However, they did not embrace the same philosophical approach, although they shared the same interest for Leibniz's philosophy. On one hand, Eliot deepened the dialectics between generosity (and compassion), religious feeling, and anxiety. However, the religious feeling is then closely linked to the possibility of disappointed faith. Anxiety and anguish have conscious and unconscious dimensions that we must learn to unveil in our daily life. On the other hand, Proust developed a dialectics between temporality and the human quest for love, happiness and truth. However, temporality is then paradoxical. It does not have any theoretical self-consistency. In Eliot's novels, we will see how the religious feeling (and the disappointed faith) plays a major role for the development of the dialectics between generosity, religious feeling, and anxiety. In Proust's novels, we will examine how the paradoxical temporality plays a decisive role in the dialectics between paradoxical temporality and the quest for love, happiness, and truth.

George Eliot: The Dialectics Between Generosity, Religious Feeling, and Anxiety

Important events can bring us a new self, and thus a very different existence. However, pride can make us distort the true importance of our own self (Eliot 1986, 551, 625). Eliot (1960, 591) described two opposite modes of existence: either "an easy floating in a stream of joy" or "a quiet resolved endurance and effort". "Floating in a stream of joy" is efficiently coping with our existential predicament, while having "a quiet resolved endurance and effort" involves the path of existential struggles. Eliot (1986, 802) believed that a spiritual life is based on the capacity of thought and especially on joy. Joy expresses our pleasure for others' success and happiness. It allows us to be detached from material goods. Generosity and compassion can be applied in the two opposite modes of existence, since they constitute the basic components of human existence. "Floating in a stream of joy" requires deepening our religious feeling and disappointed faith. Having "a quiet resolved endurance and effort" unveils the conscious and unconscious dimensions of our anxiety/anguish.

The Basic Components of Human Existence: Generosity and Compassion

Generosity and kindness are not enduring passions. They can easily disappear from our mind and heart (Eliot 1960, 10). "Life never seems so clear and easy as when the heart is beating faster at the sight of some generous self-risking deed. We feel no doubt then what is the highest prize the soul can win; we almost believe in our power to attain it" (Eliot 2013c, 1018). Compassion allows us to release ourselves "from the bondage of false concessions" (Eliot 1986, 570). Those concessions are often purely egoistic. Compassion can allow us to deepen our sense of humility. Without compassion and goodwill, we do not necessarily fall into the trap of malevolence. However, we emphasize the experience of egoistic pleasures (Eliot 1986, 660, 759). Egoism can be deeply passionate (Eliot 2013b, 490). Eliot denounced the destructive and pernicious impact of egoism on others' wellbeing (Gatens 2009, 84). Her realistic novels attempted to enhance sympathy and compassion towards suffering people (Greiner 2009, 307). There is a hidden beauty in the "secret of deep human sympathy" (Eliot 2013, 102). Sympathy can be "self-renouncing" (Eliot 2013, 203). It can also be "agonized" (Eliot 2013, 247), or "regretful" (Eliot 2013c, 851). Sympathy is often enthusiastic and passionate. It is especially the case when we deepen our awareness of the "great drama of human existence" in which our own life is a part (Eliot 2013c, 977). Compassion is sympathy towards others' pain (Eliot 2013c, 998). Sympathy can be mixed with generosity, kindness, or melancholy (Eliot 2013, 13, 132; 2013b, 673). "It is in the nature of all human passion, the lowest as well as the highest, that there is a point where it ceases to be properly egoistic, and is like a fire kindled within our being to which everything else in us is mere fuel" (Eliot 2013c, 909). Vices make an integral part of our individual life. We should look at vices in concrete lives rather than abstractly, since they are involved in individual existence (Eliot 1986, 412). In a Rousseauist perspective, Eliot believed in the basic goodness of humankind. However, it does not mean that every thought, word and deed is always impregnated with goodness and generosity. Moral education is required to develop virtuous ways of thinking, feeling, speaking, and behaving (Rousseau 1966, 306-309; Eliot 1960, 26; 1986, 37). Eliot asserted that "pity and faithfulness and memory are natural", since they make an integral part of human existence. We can be "haunted by the suffering" we have caused because pity is a natural trend in humankind. Any lack of pity reduces our capacity for unconditional love (Eliot 1960, 552).

"Floating in a Stream of Joy": Deepening our Religious Feeling and Disappointed Faith

Our reason can define the various forms of religious feeling. Newton (2012) explained that in *The Mill on the Floss*, Eliot emphasized the will and the reason as means "to overcome inclination in regard to moral choice". So, Eliot enhanced the separation of faith and morality from philosophy and science. According to Gatens (2012, 80), the main threat for the growth of human knowledge is "the tendency for a reductively conceived science to fill the gap left by the crisis of faith". Eliot (1906, 14) believed that some people can have a religious feeling without being able to rationalize it. Religion makes human being overcoming his "animalness" (Eliot 1986, 590). In *Middlemarch*, Eliot focused on feeling rather than theoretical reflection (Fay 2017, 120). Appearances can hide the fact that there can be unfulfilled potentialities in our mind and heart (Guth 1999, 923). "Religion can only change when the emotions which fill it are changed" (Eliot 2013b, 596). Love can hardly be distinguished from religious feeling (Eliot 2013, 22). In any religious

feeling, we can identify an aspect of love. In any expression of love, there is an expression of religious feeling.

Eliot (1906, 14-15) unveiled the "anguish of disappointed faith": when we are subjected to false ideas and beliefs, then our faith will become anxious. A faith-related hope is then transmuted into an existential dread (Eliot 1906, 21). A "disappointed faith" has lost its own grounds. A spiritual dread makes long-lasting uncertainties and doubts arise in our daily life. Believers are then cut off from their original faith. Their energetic certainties are transmuted into doubts (Eliot 1906, 23, 54; 1986, 94, 96, 98, 567; 2013a, 229, 246). Emotions and beliefs are full of energy (Eliot 2013c, 962). Energy is not equivalent to a will. Rather, it is the foundation of any will. Energy is involved in any existentiell decision (Eliot 2013b, 480, 571, 694). "In any case, one can hardly increase appreciably the tremendous uncertainty of life" (Eliot 2013b, 490). The uncertainties of life impact the past, the present, and the future (Eliot 2013b, 547). Our mind and heart could find refuge in our existentiell doubts (Eliot 2013c, 995). However, doubt makes perfect love impossible (Eliot 2013, 297; 2013c, 1013). Doubts can make us fall into a "threatening isolation" (Eliot 2013c, 1018). Eliot (2013b, 660) suggested that pathological doubts can be transformed into groundless moral doubts. Moral doubts can be groundless because of our existential finitude. They can also be groundless, since they have been separated from rationality. Eliot distinguished the realm of mystery and the realm of knowledge. Mystery implies the absence of any reliable knowledge, while knowledge can be partially grounded on realities (Eliot 2013, 29, 120). Faith involves mysteries (Eliot 2013a, 88). It presupposes that the power of mysteries is greater than the power of facts (Eliot 2013b, 650). Human beliefs can never be totalized. There seems to be a strong reluctance to crystallize our beliefs into a stable system (Eliot 1906, 212). Passionate beliefs can radically influence our motives and actions (Eliot 1986, 572). Passions express strength. However, any strength is not necessarily developing our existentiell freedom. "Strength is often only another name for willing bondage to irremediable weakness" (Eliot 2013a, 41).

Faith in God (the "Unseen") can allow people to better cope with suffering and afflicted emotions. It can be used for controlling our passions and reducing our wants and desires. This is what Eliot called a "self-renouncing faith" (Eliot 1960, 167, 330-331). A self-renouncing attitude requires to neglect our self-love and thus to avoid any egoistic thought, word, and deed. A "crucifixion of our selfish will" is needed to deepen our faith (Eliot 2013b, 640; 2013c, 963). This is the only way to develop the serenity of mind and heart, that is, an "inward peace". A self-renouncing attitude can have various positive impact on our mind and heart. It can get rid "vain imaginations, evil perturbations, and superfluous cares". Our "immoderate fear" and "inordinate love" will disappear (Eliot 1960, 353-354, 357). A self-renouncing attitude requires not to "seek my own happiness by sacrificing others" (Eliot 1960, 552). Eliot (1960, 611) knew that a self-renouncing attitude is not an easy way to live. However, denying the possibility to adopt a self-renouncing attitude is falling into the trap of uncontrollable passions. Disliking religious issues reduces the consciousness of our existential limitations and spiritual constraints. Our conscience is built up by various sensibilities and memories (Eliot 1986, 94, 570). However, any "exaggerated sensitiveness" can give birth to illusions (Eliot 2013b, 369). Eliot denounced all forms of superstition as distorted feelings. Superstitions can make us neglect or forget any rational distinction between good and evil (Eliot 2013b, 362). "But in complex a thing as human nature, we must consider, it is hard to find rules without exceptions" (Eliot 2013, 202; 2013a, 215). Any rational distinction between good

and evil takes for granted that human nature is fallible. Human nature involves long-lasting passions, feelings and desires (Eliot 2013a, 147, 154). "Human feeling is like the mighty rivers that bless the earth; it does not wait for beauty – it flows with resistless force and brings beauty with it" (Eliot 2013, 102). Vicious words and deeds make the frontiers between good and evil fragile (Eliot 2013a, 193). Eliot (2013, 103) asserted that our moral behavior is grounded on feelings rather than ideas and thoughts. We can easily identify the influence of Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature* (Hume 1985) and Rousseau's *Émile ou de l'éducation* (Rousseau 1966). Feelings provide a specific kind of knowledge (Eliot 2013, 297). However, the various feelings and emotions are not necessarily compatible with each other. There can be a "conflict of feelings" (Eliot 2013b, 565).

Superstitions convey a "blind faith" and create a feeling of wretchedness (Eliot 2013b, 365; 2013c, 915, 941-943, 956, 977, 1074, 1082). Eliot (2013, 224) identified the possibility of contradiction between the feeling of wretchedness and the feeling of exultation towards our own life. The feeling of wretchedness could make us lose the courage to face our own death, while the feeling of exultation strongly enhances our state of "being in life". The feeling of wretchedness can be dreadful. It can affect one's spiritual condition (Eliot 2013b, 621, 640). Eliot (2013, 195) referred to "convulsive, motiveless actions by which wretched men and women leap from a temporary sorrow into a lifelong misery". Eliot (2013c, 784) quoted Epictetus (Arrien 2000, 68): "For men are disturbed not by things themselves, but by their opinions or thoughts concerning those things". Adopting a new attitude opens the way to new interpretations (Eliot 2013b, 574). The religious life can provide us the highest refuge from personal trouble (Eliot 1986, 507-508). Our soul is "a temple of remembrance where the treasures of knowledge enter and the inner sanctuary is hope" (Eliot 1986, 555). God is the Invisible and the Inexplicable (Eliot 1906, 3, 101). God is the Omnipresent that makes all beings, things and phenomena interconnected (Eliot 1986, 812). People who do not have any "enthusiastic religious faith" may use their imagination to develop and strengthen their desires and hopes. However, their reminiscences from the past can nurture their existential fears (Eliot 1906, 3-4). Faith is a strong power to resist self-despair (Eliot 1986, 867). We should remain humble, when deepening the "mysteries of God's dealings" (Eliot 2013, 104). God can be understood as "a supreme and righteous Ruler" (Eliot 2013c, 874). Everything comes from God. Our capacity for love and inner peace is grounded on God's Will. God is the ultimate ground for our own soul. God's Will is "holy, just, and good" (Eliot 2013, 16, 19, 27). God is the "loving, infinite Presence" in our own soul (Eliot 2013, 22, 69). The infinite Presence is "the presence of the living God" and "the Unknown towards which we have sent forth irrepressible cries in our loneliness" (Eliot 2013, 261, 284). Eliot (2013c, 912) believed that only a just and loving soul can counterbalance the radical effect of existential loneliness. According to Eliot (2013c, 937), faith gives us a "large freedom of the soul". Faith requires the strong belief that "the being who is nearest to us is greater than ourselves". In a Schleiermacherian way (Schleiermacher 1944, 143-205), Eliot (2013c, 890) referred to "the passionate sense of the infinite". Faith is thus inherently passionate (Eliot 2013c, 963). That is why a "loving faith" is possible (Eliot 2013b, 300).

"Having Quiet Resolved Endurance and Effort": Unveiling Conscious and Un-conscious Dimensions of Anxiety/Anguish

Eliot (1986, 791) defined the strength of humankind as "the balance between separateness and communication". Separateness implies differences, while communication re-

fers to commonalities between all human beings. Eliot's ethics reflected the emphasis on both aspects of human predicament (Albrecht 2012, 392, 399). Being with others is exercising our existential freedom "in-front-of-others" and "in-the-world". Nemoianu (2010, 77-78) explained that our releasement from any form of existential bondage gives birth to freedom. However, such existential freedom is never unconditioned. It is rather determined by various conditioning factors. It is especially the case with any revolutionary cause that involves ideological thought. Having a revolutionary spirit is working "all our life long against privilege, monopoly, and oppression". Any revolutionary spirit attempts "to correct the moral rules of the world" (Eliot 2013a, 95, 97). It is basically an issue of social justice (Eliot 2013b, 554). We need to check to what extent our ideological thoughts and beliefs can be criticized from a moral viewpoint. "There is no general doctrine which is not capable of eating out our morality if unchecked by the deep-seated habit of direct fellow-feeling with individual fellow-men" (Eliot 2013b, 595). Criticizing ideologies is unveiling its inner contradictions. In our world, we can perceive many contradictions. However, it does not mean that such contradictions are real. In concrete life and ideological thoughts, apparent contradictions may arise from our misunderstanding of events, situations, and phenomena (Eliot 1986, 267). Some words can "cover different meanings to different minds" (Eliot 2013b, 328). Thus, we should criticize our own interpretations/reinterpretations of worldly events and phenomena. According to Langland (1994, 90-91), Eliot's literary realism emphasized "narrative probability" rather than simple possibilities. In *Adam Bede*, Eliot unveiled realities as they are reflected in the observer's mind. She did not presuppose that the meaning of realities is constantly changing. Eliot (2013, 165) referred to "an ingenious web of probabilities – the surest screen a wise man can place between himself and the truth".

Our skills can be unconscious. Dreaming is being unconscious of concrete efforts and requirements for a given behavior. We can be unconscious of others' influence on our own way of thinking, speaking, feeling, and behaving (Eliot 2013, 17, 24, 57-58, 64). We could be unaware of realistic dangers and threats as well as our surrounding environment (Eliot 2013, 166, 238; 2013c, 987, 995). Our actions and attitudes can be unconsciously driven (Eliot 2013, 259; 2013c, 929). Tressler (2011, 484) explained that double consciousness refers to "the state of semi-conscious reverie in which conscious thought is temporarily suspended". Eliot's realistic novels unveiled the probability of double consciousness in our daily life (Eliot 1986, 691). Self-consciousness has corporeal effects (Eliot 2013c, 1015). We usually attribute consciousness to some thoughts and emotions (Eliot 2013, 60). "Prudent resolution" can be grounded on our self-consciousness (Eliot 2013, 72). Eliot (2013, 90) explained that a "confused self-consciousness" can give birth to an excess of indifference. Eliot (2013, 113) insisted on our consciousness of some past events, since those events can still influence our way of thinking, speaking, feeling, and behaving. Our emotions are subtly connected to our remembrance of things past. We can then understand why Proust loved Eliot's novels. Proust and Eliot shared the same interpretation of our "living past". We can "enrich our present with our most precious past" (Eliot 2013, 287). However, we can be subjected to the power of some past events. If so, then we lose part of our freedom (Eliot 2013b, 581). The intensity of our self-consciousness can be determined by the "outward stillness" (Eliot 2013, 175).

Even without memory, the life is bound into one by a zone of dependence in growth and decay; but intense memory forces a man to own his blameworthy past. With memory set smarting like a reopened wound, a man's past is not simply a dead history, an outworn

preparation of the present: it is not a repented error shaken loose from the life; it is a still quivering part of himself, bringing shudders and bitter flavors and the tinglings of a merited shame (Eliot 2013b, 593).

We should never wish to get rid of the past, when looking at our own future. Our future can never arise without “the ties of the past”. Those ties are not equivalent to reminiscences from the past, but rather to “feelings and expectations we have raised in other minds” (Eliot 1960, 545). If ties of the past do not exist, then our duties are groundless. We would then be subjected to the requirements of the present moment. The ties of the past allow us to build up our moral duties and to comply with such duties (Eliot 1960, 585). Our past experiences are true experiences that can still influence our present and future (Eliot 1906, 16). Eliot (1906, 191) asserted that we can become fully aware of the basic unity between our past and our present. Consciousness is closely linked to Time, particularly to the present (Eliot 2013, 260). Sometimes we can feel “the wide distance between our present and past self” (Eliot 2013c, 961).

Anxiety depends on promise and hope. Being anxious is “making an indefinite promise to an indefinite hope” (Eliot 1986, 765). Anxiety can arise, when being in touch with others (Eliot 2013, 26, 31, 45-46, 89, 176, 243, 256-257; 2013a, 224, 23; 2013b, 374). Anxiety can also be related to a troubled mind and heart (Eliot 2013, 53). The arising of anxiety can be caused by a changing environment (Eliot 2013b, 688, 692). The object of anxiety lies in the powerful character of our future feelings and deeds (Eliot 2013, 181, 256, 269). Anxieties are often expressed through corporeal effects (Eliot 2013b, 592; 2013c, 783, 827, 853). They can reflect lived experiences in given realms of social life (Eliot 2013c, 896). However, anxiety can become excessive anxiety as a pathological form of anxiety (“overanxiety”: Eliot 2013, 27; 2013c, 884) or as an existentiell anguish. We can identify various objects, beings, events and phenomena that make us anxious. However, being anguish seems to be groundless. We can never reach the true origin of such encompassing feeling (Eliot 2013, 245, 247). Someone can accept to feel existentiell anguish, since such feeling opens the way to a “great end”. It is then a conscious self-sacrifice (Eliot 2013c, 756). Unlike anxiety, anguish does not necessarily provoke corporeal change (Eliot 2013b, 687). Anguish is a deep feeling we can try to strongly repress (Eliot 2013c, 856). Anxiety seems to prepare our mind and heart to develop a mode of anguish. Being anxious does not necessarily give birth to a psychological state of anguish. However, being anguish requires prior experiences of anxiety. Existentiell anguish can never be isolated from the growing development of anxious experiences in our daily life. There can be conscious and unconscious dimensions in every anxious experience. Even the state of existentiell anguish is not necessarily conscious throughout our life. Eliot rightly explained the connectedness between anxiety and anguish. She did not address the existentiell issues related to anguish. However, Eliot knew the difference between anxiety and anguish.

Marcel Proust: The Dialectics Between Paradoxical Temporality and the Quest for Love, Happiness and Truth

In Proust’s *À la recherche du temps perdu*, the notion of Time is constantly developed in various ways. It is clearly the focus of that novel. However, living “in-time” is not described in a linear manner. There is a basic flexibility between the past, the present, and the future. A non-linear conception of temporality unveils how the past can still influence our present and how the future can play a decisive role in our present choices and decisions. In one’s life, there is an interconnectedness between the past and the present,

between the present and the future, and even between the past and the future. But such non-linear conception of Time has deep (and paradoxical) consequences for the way we live "in-time". It is especially true for the way we pursue our quest for love, happiness, and truth. Proust enlightened how the non-linear dimension of human temporality affects our existentiell search for love, happiness, and truth.

The Paradoxical Temporality

In every human life, Time passes (Proust 2001a, 502). Daily time is elastic. Our passions make our temporality expand. But the passions we inspire to others make our temporality radically shrink (Proust 1987, 295). In Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu*, we can identify five basic components of our "paradoxical temporality": the meaning of our existence "in-time" is that our being is "in-time", while having a "timeless being"; Time is simultaneously creative and destructive; our "future-oriented past" and our "here-and-now" are interconnected; existing is becoming oneself "in-front-of-others"; time and memories have limited power on human existence.

First Component: Living "in-time" Means that Being "in-time" is Having a "Timeless Being"

Memory makes our past emerging in the present moment. In doing so, it inevitably attempts to change the past. Nonetheless, such illusory attempt annihilates a great dimension of Time, that is, our capacity to reinvent the past in our here-and-now (Proust 1972, 422). Our past is remoulded and actualized in our present. We are not always deeply aware that our past is still present in our present moment. The process of internalization allows us to reach the depths of our changing self. Some past events are still living in our self (Proust 1972, 428, 440-441). Our memories reflect a meaningful past that emerges from the events themselves. Events and phenomena constitute the conventional and crystallized reality that is prone to deny the existence of any other meaningful past. Crystallizing the past is reducing the set of meanings drawn from past events and phenomena. The meaning of our daily life needs the meaningfulness of our past events and memories (Proust 1972, 257). The essence of things, beings, events and phenomena is not external to our own self. Rather, it is our own self (Proust 1993, 55). We "are" the essence of external things, beings, events and phenomena, since our own self continuously internalizes them. This is equivalent to the awareness of "a timeless being within oneself", said Dancy (1995, 22, 26). According to Proust (1972, 259), an enduring part of our self overcomes the superposition of our identity-related layers. Everybody who lives "in-time" is also a "timeless being". This is the first component of our paradoxical temporality.

The Second Component: Time Creates Renewal, While Making Everything Degenerate

Time creates something new for every existing being. Time can make forgiveness, forgetfulness and indifference coexist (Proust 1972, 321, 323, 353). Time modifies circumstances (Proust 1972, 267-268). We could even consider that Time is an artist, said Proust (1972, 306). If so, then the works of art are the only means to recover lost time (Proust 1972, 262). Nonetheless, Time gives birth to forgetfulness. Forgetfulness makes our notion of Time change. Beings, things and phenomena always deeply affect the notion of Time. Beings, things and phenomena always remain perishable (Proust 2001, 174, 248). Forgetfulness is the realm of nothingness, while memories constitute the realm of reality (1987b, 118-119, 251). The world in which we live is the realm of nothingness (Proust

2000, 264-265). If everything is perishable, then it is "going-to-nothingness". Death opens the way to the infinite and to nothingness (Proust 2001a, 872).

Clock time is a distortion of human temporality (Proust 1987c, 151). According to De Renéville (1985, 228), Proust have described time as an integral part of human existence. He did not refer to the "objective clock-time". Time is something that we cannot own, since we are "in-time". De Renéville suggested that Proust's notion of time is quite close to Heidegger's concept of time. However, Proust has not analyzed time as an existential-ontological category. Proust's and Heidegger's perspective converge to a point: the measurement of time makes it public. So, every form of "nowness" can be compared to multiple others. As Heidegger (1962, 470) rightly said, public time unveils "a present-at-hand multiplicity of nows". The flow of time is the archetype of degeneration. We usually live as though Time could not affect us. Nonetheless, Time is continuously degrading our own existence (Proust 1987, 144). Time destroys every being, thing, event, or phenomenon. It continuously causes a radical change in the essence of all beings, things, events, and phenomena (Proust 1972, 300; 2019, 135). From a chronological viewpoint (clock-time), Time is the infinite succession of "nows". Every instant is constantly dying and giving birth to the next moment. If the flow of time expresses degeneration, then every temporal being, thing, event or phenomenon is also constantly degenerating. Time is essentially degeneration. That is why Eternity cannot be a dimension of Time. Eternity excludes any form of degeneration. Every temporally based being is perishable, while an "Eternal Being" can never degenerate. Perishable beings, things and phenomena are ever-changing and degenerating. Degenerating things, beings and phenomena can never be totally seized, since their "essence" is constantly changing. We always attempt to grasp "reality-as-it-is". Unfortunately, we are continuously finding nothingness. Time makes things, beings, events and phenomena degenerate. This is the second component of our paradoxical temporality.

The Third Component: Our "Future-Oriented Past" and Our Here-and-Now Are Interconnected

We always imagine that our present experience is radically different from our past experiences (Proust 1995, 429). Consciously or not, the future inhabits our mind and heart (Proust 1987b, 106). Nonetheless, something seems not to be absorbed by nothingness, argued Proust (1995, 395). Reality seems to be reluctant to be absorbed by nothingness. It is particularly true for memories. Nothingness is contradicted by the reminiscences of past events. If nothingness were overwhelming, then there would never be any reminiscence of past events. Memories deny the overwhelming power of nothingness (Proust 1987b, 251). Reminiscences of past events are constantly moving. When the past (our present memories) were the present (as a living experience), it was oriented towards the future. Due to the flow of time, this future has become the past. A "future-oriented past" has been safeguarded in our memory, insofar as it has not been realized until now. Such future has been transformed into a past (Proust 2001, 71, 139). Preserving the future cannot be realized by the immediate joy of the present moment. The "future-oriented past" can only be preserved through the wise thoughts that come from the past (Proust 1987a, 201). A "future-oriented past" can be still a "possibility-to-be", that is, a choice that allows us to become "who-we-would-like-to-be". It can be realized in our personalized "here-and-now". Focusing on the present moment cannot preserve such "future-oriented past". We can avoid the degeneration of our "future-oriented past" in reminding the "lessons of wisdom" we have drawn from past events. Some past events

are intrinsically related to our “future-oriented past”. We have learned a lot from such events. Reminding such learning could make our “future-oriented past” arise in our personalized “here-and-now”. Durán (1991, 77) rightly suggested that Proust’s notion of “lost time” implies that the past still exists. If the past still exists, then it can be “recovered” or “recaptured” in a very different way. The loss of time is actuated by the search for our lost time, said Earle (2002, 950). We cannot know the existence of our lost time before searching for it. We do not have to subject ourselves to past events, since we must continuously decide “who-we-would-like-to-be”. Nonetheless, our “future-oriented past” could give us new possibilities-to-be. It can even provide and strengthen relevant “world-dreams” for our personalized “here-and-now”.

The “future-oriented past” in the here-and-now is qualitatively different than its original substance and scope. We cannot actualize the “future-oriented past”, while safeguarding the past as time period. We “live-in” a personalized “here-and-now”. The context has changed. The way the “future-oriented past” will be realized cannot be compared to the probable way it would have been actualized in its “original present”. Everything that has existed is prone to reappear (Proust 1993, 377). However, when something reappears, it is never the same as the way it has appeared in the past (Proust 2000, 70). Events have a threefold temporal structure: (1) the temporality of their historically based breakthrough: every event conveys its “having-been” that is historically induced, (2) the temporality of the future-focused orientation: every event reflects “what-it-is”, (3) the temporality of retrospective outlook: every event can make the past arise in the present (Proust 2000, 386). The future could already inhabit our mind/heart, even unconsciously. Our thoughts and words could make such future more decisive in a short delay, or in a very long-run (Proust 1987b, 106). The third aspect of our paradoxical temporality is the interconnectedness between our future-oriented past and our here-and-now.

The Fourth Component: Existing is Becoming Oneself “In-Front-of-Others”

“Existentiell decisiveness” requires choosing our “future-oriented past” as our utmost possibility-to-be. Being “in-time” is being a “self-in-a-world”. Every self is made of innumerable selves that successively die. Every self is made of an overlay of successive states of mind/heart (Proust 1965, 207; 1972, 259-260; 2001, 14, 126). In a Leibnizian way, Proust asserted that there is a very long distance between our intelligence and our heart (Proust 1987c, 85; Leibniz 2008). The superposition of identity-related layers is not immutable. Rather, it is always changing. Some layers are suddenly crystallized, while others are degenerating (Proust 1972, 375; 2001, 126). We are continuously becoming who-we-are. Human being can never go out of himself/herself, except when he/she is loving someone (Proust 2019, 72). Even imitating someone is not becoming him/her. It is only a way to renew our “becoming-oneself”. It is a mode of “becoming-oneself”. Internalizing processes allow us to deepen our self-understanding and to improve our understanding of others’ self (Proust 2001, 34). There is a gap between our self-image and others’ perception of our own self (Proust 1995, 277). We absolutely want to avoid self-contempt (Proust 1987c, 35). Our self-identity is influenced by the discrepancy between our desired self-projection and others’ perception of our self. Our self-identity is created “in-front-of-others”. We need others’ self-identity to define our own. We can even allow others to become who-they-are. Everything in our inner life is intertwined and overlapped (Proust 2000, 241). We are always involved in a movement of self-transcendence (Proust 1993, 97). Choosing our thoughts, words, feelings, attitudes and actions is ex-

ploring the depths of our “becoming-oneself”. However, any self is “in-a-world” and “with-others”. We cannot identify our own self without being “in-front-of-others”. Our “in-the-worldliness” is closely linked to our existentiell “being-in-front-of-others”. Such existentiell positioning could eventually provoke misunderstandings and conflicts as much as understanding and peace. Everybody is temporally conditioned and existentially “being-free”. The existentiell-ontic expressions of our being-free imply temporally based choice of possibilities-to-be. “Existentiell decisiveness” unveils such temporally based choice of possibilities-to-be. Those choices are crucial for our existentiell project-to-be. They allow us to create our self-identity. The fourth component of our paradoxical temporality is our becoming-oneself in our world and with others.

The Fifth Component: Time and Memories Have Limited Power on Human Existence

We can never know our whole self (Proust 2000, 140). Sometimes, we need to leave our own self and be in touch with others’ self (Proust 1995, 148). But we cannot leave our self since we “are” our own self. We know others through our self’s perspective (Proust 2001, 34, 148). Language cannot express the depths of our soul (Proust 1987, 223). Education reflects part of our soul (Proust 1987b, 153). Our memories about past events extend to the future. They let room for the various conditioning factors that precede those past events. Memories about past events have modified them (Proust 2000, 386). Our “total soul” would then include our unconscious or forgotten memories (Balsamo 2008, 457). Our “total soul” can never be totally recovered (Proust 1987b, 237). The “unknown realm” within the depths of our soul gathers our memories of past events and phenomena (Proust 1972, 258; 1987b, 238). Our own self and life remain unknowable. Proust (1972, 368-369) defined the “limited” power of Time and the “limited” power of memory. Time can modify our own self. Such power of impairing our self is not affected by our memory. However, Time can never change others’ perception of our own self. The crystallized power of memories reduces the power of Time on our daily life. When we are not subjected to doubt, then our expectation of future pleasures requires the multiplicity of anticipated representations. Time is divided in very small temporal units (Proust 1995, 393). Throughout the whole History, human being expresses the same angry, sadness, and courage, regardless of changing situations and successive generations. Such emotions make an integral part of our humanity (Proust 1970, 97-98; 1972, 317). But unlimited courage, infinite hope and devotion for others’ wellbeing are also noble components of human life (Proust 2019, 107-108). The elapsed time makes us forget our past antipathy and disdain. We even forget the true grounds for such antipathy and disdain. Everybody feels that he/she has an unceasingly increased temporality. However, our place within Time can never be precisely measured, since it is highly subjective (Proust 1972, 375, 439-440). We can recover past experiences and representations. However, nobody can never destroy Time (Proust 1987c, 41). We can recover the sensations related to our past experiences. Nonetheless, Time can hinder us to identify the nature of such sensations (Proust 1965, 59). The fifth component of our paradoxical temporality is the limited power of Time and memories.

The Quest for Love, Happiness and Truth

From an existentiell-ontic perspective, our self-identity is related to the existentiell search for love, happiness, and truth. The quest for love, happiness and truth unveils two basic types of relational interconnectedness: the interconnectedness between love,

desire/imagination, and happiness; the interconnectedness between happiness and the search for Truth/morality. The paradoxical temporality is involved in both types of interconnectedness. Pleasure lies in every present moment. Imagination is related to the past and the future. Future is involved in desires and expectations.

The Interconnectedness Between Love, Desire/Imagination, and Happiness

Love seems to be at the heart of human relationships. It is the basic power of human life. We could love anyone, although we usually do not know why we love him/her. That is the mystery of love, said Proust (1995, 232). Love is multidimensional, and thus ungraspable. Respect is the *sine qua non* condition for love, argued Proust (1970, 172). Mutual understanding arises from our capacity for unconditional love and compassion. Understanding others' emotional life is grasping the various expressions of their love. At the very least, being loved requires to be understood by others. The search for mutual love is an intrinsic component of human relationships. Nobody wants to be hated. Everyone wants to be loved because he/she loves others (Proust 2001, 78). Only people who love could know they are hated, said Proust (2001a, 812). Hatred and love are interconnected. The more intensely we love someone, the less we are prone to hate him/her. The more intensely we hate someone, the less we can love him/her. The lack of hate strengthens love, while the lack of love nurtures the power of hatred. Hatred is intrinsically related to vengeance (Proust 2001a, 262). In some situations, we love what we do not own. We love the object of our desires and expectations (Proust 2000, 369-370). Such love can make jealousy arise in our mind and heart. In other situations, we hate what we do not want to own. We can imagine what is absent, that is, "what-is-not-in-front-of-us" (Proust 1972, 229). In some cases, the power of imagination can give birth to love, while in others it can open the way to jealousy. Without love, we could always "live-in" misunderstandings and conflicts. Love makes us search for happiness and social harmony in daily life.

The desire for happiness is always a desire for a specific happiness. A "general happiness" is not a true happiness, since it is not related to an existentiell quest for happiness. Only a specific notion of happiness can allow us to be "in-quest-for-happiness". Being aware of happiness strengthens our desire to live (Proust 1987a, 22-23). It is well-known that Proust's notion of desire was grounded on Schopenhauer's philosophy (Souday 1927, 87; Duplay 1972, 42). Schopenhauer (2009, 587) asserted that desires come from a basic lack or dissatisfaction. However, any satisfaction is always fragmentary. That is why fulfilled desires produce further desires. Desires nurture our personal growth. But the thirst for earthly goods (objects, renown, power) wilts everything (Proust 1979, 179-180). Desires are rooted in beliefs (Proust 2001, 93). They can enlighten our search for truth and even the frontiers between good and evil. We can only desire what we believe to be substantially existing. However, our desires are not always convergent. Sometimes they contradict each other. Desires can never be promises of happiness, said Proust (1987, 152). The way we meet our desires does not open the door to sustainable happiness, since further desires inevitably arise. Moreover, opposite causes and conditioning factors are strengthened by other desires. Things, beings and phenomena do not have any intrinsic power. Desiring them can never allow us to become happy in the long-term. At any time, human being defines the power and meaning of things, beings, events, and phenomena (Proust 1972, 211).

Our sense organs can corrupt our imagination (Proust 2019, 62). Pure imagination is much less egoistic than memories (Proust 1987b, 235). Imagination makes us define the

basic characteristics of happiness. However, those characteristics come from a prior analysis of our utmost desires. We believe that some desires could lead to happiness. Such belief is the ground for all characteristics of happiness. It does not say a single word about the nature of happiness (Proust 1987a, 13). The object of our imagination is nothing but absent things, beings, and events (Proust 1972, 229). Imagination makes us desire what we cannot own (Proust 1987a, 87). It distorts the essence of some things, beings, events, or phenomena (Proust 1987a, 265; 2002, 39). Imagination always goes beyond reality (Proust 1987c, 159; 2001a, 735). Any pleasure that is not subjected to our imagination is empty (Proust 1987a, 180). Our suffering can make imagination and thought deeply influence our behavior (Proust 1972, 273). Imagination makes us regret past events and expect the arising of future events (Proust, 1979, 86). It can release us from the power of past and present, as though our own being were totally timeless, that is, without any past and present. Imagination is then related to a non-religious form of eternity. It expresses our “timeless self”. Imagination does not have any experience, since it is full of hope. It conveys an idealized perception of reality (Proust 2001a, 130-131, 465). The power of imagination is inherently linked to truth-claims. Nobody can give us Absolute Truth. Rather, truth-claims mirror the way we create Truth by ourselves (Proust 1970, 229).

Every path to happiness expresses a possibility-to-be that can be chosen. Such multiplicity of possible lives (or possibilities-to-be) enhances our personality. But most of possible lives will never be actualized, argued Proust (1965, 87, 90-91). We are continuously choosing given possibilities-to-be, while excluding others. In doing so, we choose a given path to happiness/unhappiness. Living a happy life makes every relationship, event or phenomenon become a source of happiness. The presence/absence of happiness lies at the bottom of our heart/mind (Proust 2001a, 166, 593). Being happy should be the only objective of our life. It necessarily excludes egoistic attitudes and behaviors. Egocentrism can only give birth to unhappiness. Altruism never makes someone unhappy. Rather, it nurtures our happiness as well as others’ happiness. Happiness is intrinsically linked to unconditional love, harmony and peace. Living for-others is the only way to be happy in our own life.

The Interconnectedness Between Happiness and the Existentiell Search for Truth/Morality

Giving meaning to things, beings, events and phenomena can never be based on empirical facts. Human being is not an inquiring subject, but rather a subjective thinker (Kierkegaard 1974). Empirical facts can be useful for understanding the nature of beings, things, events, and phenomena. However, “giving-meaning processes” are not objectively oriented. Rather, they mirror our subjective existence. Facts are unable to make beliefs arise/disappear (Proust 1993, 159, 195). Rather, they are related to empirically observable things, beings, events, and phenomena. Only the inquiring subject is infinitely concerned with empirical facts. Beliefs are rather linked to intuition, imagination, hope, and desires. The subjective thinker is ultimately concerned with his/her own existence. Every belief is subjected to existentiell doubt, said Proust (2001a, 519-520). The subjective thinker cannot have any belief without taking his/her existentiell doubts into account. Everything is existentially uncertain. Every existentiell questioning is endless. Philosophical doubt is among the most important characteristics of human nature. Too often, we believe that the present state of things can never be different. We then exclude all other possibilities-to-be (Proust 1995, 462-463). Human being is “in-quest-for meaning”, since he/she is “being-who-interprets-reality”.

Searching for Truth and defining morality are inextricably linked with each other. Proust referred to Descartes' conception of truth (Descartes 1979, 151-159): certainties driven from evidence constitute the basic criterium for truth. Proust (2001a, 345, 658). The existentiell quest-for-meaning can be either a search for Truth or a quest for morality. In traditional moralities, meanings are related to an Absolute Truth (Truth-itself). They are not objective. But they aim at an absolute and knowable Truth. Since the Enlightenment, traditional moralities have been strongly criticized. Meanings are rather closely linked to truth-claims. Meanings are then subjectively defined. They are not related to any Truth-itself. So, we must take our existentiell "quest-for-Truth" into account. Traditional moralities presuppose the existence of Truth-itself. Searching for Truth is thus appropriating Truth-itself. Post-modern philosophers and writers generally promote the existence of relative truths (truth-claims). Searching for Truth involves exchanging our truth-claims with others. In moral worldviews, we can connect ourselves to Truth-itself. But post-modernity strongly affirms that there is no Truth-itself. Traditional moralities do not seriously take existentiell uncertainties and doubts into account. If it were the case, then any preconception of Truth-itself would be radically shaken. Doubting requires accepting the possibility that we follow a wrong path. Being uncertain and doubting are cognitive and moral attitudes that undermine the existence of Truth-itself. Existentiell uncertainties and doubts make the frontiers between good and evil fragile. There is nothing absolutely good/evil. Good and evil are always changing. Every action has morally good and wrong consequences. Truth is never absolute, said Proust (2001a, 137, 267). We can never define good without evil, and vice-versa. Evil makes good deploy itself in the very long-run (Proust 1972, 177). It does not mean that Evil is historically needed. Rather, the existence of Evil mirrors the necessity to orient ourselves towards the Good. Truth can never be reduced to "what-we-can-imagine". Events and phenomena are determined by unknown prior realities, argued Proust (2001a, 727).

Human being continuously searches for morality. Being in quest for morality requires listening to our mind/heart. Everybody imagines that he/she is the one who listens to his/her own words, said (Proust 1987, 295). Self-listening is being involved in dialogical processes. Listening to the voice of our own self is talking to an "ideal/external I". In doing so, we develop our existentiell passions, emotions, and sentiments. We can subjectively know others' passions. But such knowledge is always limited. Listening to others can allow us to better know "who-we-are". Others' passions could make us internalize our own feelings and passions. Everybody tries to find motives behind his/her passions (Proust 1993, 139, 423). We cannot uproot our existentiell passions. However, existentiell passions are risky, since they can make us neglect others' well-being. Existentiell passions are rarely altruistic. In some situations, existentiell passions can reduce our capacity for universal/unconditional love and compassion. In other situations, they allow us to deepen the meaning and implications of unconditional love, altruism, and compassion. Unconditional love is not related to self-understanding. It does not depend on the way we can understand others' self. Unconditional love does not depend on anything at all. Others' self remains unknowable for us. Our representations of others' "self-in-a-world" are always partial, useless, and irrelevant. Unconditional love makes us forget others' weaknesses. We usually hate whoever looks like us. We are unable to see our own weaknesses from an external viewpoint (Proust 2000, 54, 99). Our greatest challenge is to change our "self-in-a-world" and to abandon its self-idealized form. Unconditional altruism and love can be influenced by existentiell passions. Any existentiell

search for morality is compatible with unconditional altruism and love. However, self-control is very important. Otherwise, existentiell passions can reduce our capacity to express unconditional altruism and love. If existentiell passions are rationally controlled, then they can strengthen our path to unconditional altruism and love.

Conclusion

George Eliot has described how generosity and compassion constitute basic components of human life. She has also identified two modes of existence: either "floating in a stream of joy" (having religious feeling and a disappointed faith) or "having quiet resolved endurance and effort" (unveiling the conscious and unconscious dimensions of anxiety/anguish). In Eliot's novels, the religious feeling was much more important than the issue of human temporality. Marcel Proust explained how the non-linear conception of Time gives birth to a paradoxical temporality. He put the emphasis on the connectedness between the paradoxical temporality and the human quest for love, happiness, and truth. In Proust's novels, human temporality is much more emphasized than the religious feeling.

Future research could compare Eliot and Proust, from a philosophical viewpoint. Their common interest for Leibniz's philosophy is certainly an area for further research. Above all, future research could examine how Eliot and Proust have chosen very different philosophical approaches. Eliot was basically influenced by Aristotle and Spinoza, while Proust was deeply influenced by Plato, Kant and Schopenhauer. Those philosophical approaches can have a very important impact on the way a writer deals with social, cultural, political, economic, and even religious/spiritual issues. Choosing a philosophical perspective for analyzing their novels could enlighten how Eliot and Proust did not really share the same worldview.

Université de Sherbrooke, Canada

References

- Albrecht, Thomas. "The Balance of Separateness and Communication: Cosmopolitan Ethics in George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*." *ELH* 79.2 (2012): 389-416.
- Arrien. *Manuel d'Épictète*. Paris: Le livre de poche, 2000.
- Balsamo, Gian. "The Place of the Soul in Augustine and Proust: Amorous Memory versus Neuroscience." *The Journal of Religion* 88.4 (2008): 439-465.
- Dancy, Jonathan. "New Truths in Proust?" *The Modern Language Review* 90.1 (1995): 18-28.
- De Renéville, Jacques Rolland. "Thèmes métaphysiques chez Marcel Proust." *Revue de métaphysique et de morale* 90.2 (1985): 218-229.
- Descartes, René. *Méditation Cinquième*. In *Méditations métaphysiques*. Paris: GF-Flammarion, 1979, 149-163.
- Duplay, Maurice. *Mon ami Marcel Proust. Souvenirs intimes*. Paris: Gallimard, 1972.
- Durán, Richard. "Fourth-Dimensional Time and Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu*." *South Atlantic Review* 56.2 (1991): 73-90.

- Eliot George. Adam Bede. In *George Eliot's Novels. Volume 1*. Oxford: Benediction Classics, 2013, 3-314.
- _____. *Daniel Deronda*. London: Penguin Books, 1986.
- _____. Felix Holt, the Radical. In *George Eliot's Novels. Volume 2*. Oxford: Benediction Classics, 2013a, 3-258.
- _____. Middlemarch. In *George Eliot's Novels. Volume 2*. Oxford: Benediction Classics, 2013b, 259-718.
- _____. Romola. In *George Eliot's Novels. Volume 1*. Oxford: Benediction Classics, 2013c, 751-1092.
- _____. *Silas Marner*. London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1906.
- _____. *The Mill on the Floss*. London: Longmans, 1960.
- Erle, Bo. "Involuntary Narration, Narrating Involution: Proust on Death, Repetition and Self-Becoming." *MNL* 117.5 (2002): 943-970.
- Fay, Brian. "What George Eliot of *Middlemarch* Could Have Taught Spinoza." *Philosophy and Literature* 41 (2017): 119-135.
- Gatens, Moira. "Compelling Fictions: Spinoza and George Eliot on Imagination and Belief." *European Journal of Philosophy* 20.1 (2012): 74-90.
- _____. "The Art and Philosophy of George Eliot." *Philosophy and Literature* 33.1 (2009): 73-90.
- Greiner, Rae. "Sympathy Time: Adam Smith, George Eliot and the Realist Novel." *Narrative* 17.3 (2009): 291-311.
- Guth, Deborah. "George Eliot and Schiller: Narrative Ambivalence in '*Middlemarch*' and '*Felix Holt*'." *The Modern Language Review* 94.4 (1999): 913-924.
- Heidegger, Martin. *Being and Time*. New York: Harper and Row Publishers.
- Hume, David. *A Treatise of Human Nature*. London: Penguin Books, 1985.
- Kierkegaard, Soeren. *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*. Swenson, David F. and Lowrie, Walter (Trans.). Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Langland, Elizabeth. Inventing Reality: The Ideological Commitments of George Eliot's *Middlemarch*. *Narrative* 2.2 (1994): 87-111.
- Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm. *Discours de métaphysique*. In *Discours de métaphysique. Essais de théodicée. Monadologie*. Frémont, Christiane (Trans.). Paris: Flammarion, 2008, 1-90.
- Nemoianu, Virgil Martin. "The Spinozist Freedom of George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*." *Philosophy and Literature* 34.1 (2010): 65-81.
- Newton, K. M. "George Eliot Kant, and Free Will." *Philosophy and Literature* 36.2 (2012): 441-456.
- Proust, Marcel. *Albertine disparue*. Paris: Gallimard, 2001.
- _____. *À l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs. Tome 1*. Paris: GF-Flammarion, 1987.
- _____. *À l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs. Tome 2*. Paris: GF-Flammarion, 1987a.
- _____. *Contre Sainte-Beuve*. Paris: Gallimard, 1965.
- _____. *Du côté de chez Swann*. Paris: Bookking International, 1993.
- _____. *Jean Santeuil*. Paris: Gallimard, 2001a.
- _____. *La Confession d'une jeune fille et autres textes*. Paris: Librio, 2002.
- _____. *La Prisonnière*. Paris: Gallimard, 2000.
- _____. *Le côté de Guermantes*. Paris: Bookking International, 1995.
- _____. *Le Mystérieux Correspondant et autres nouvelles inédites*. Paris: Éditions de Fallois, 2019.
- _____. *Les plaisirs et les jours*. Paris: Gallimard, 1979.
- _____. *Le temps retrouvé*. Paris: Gallimard, 1972.
- _____. *Pastiches et mélanges*. Paris: Gallimard, 1970.
- _____. *Sodome et Gomorrhe. Tome 1*. Paris: GF-Flammarion, 1987b.
- _____. *Sodome et Gomorrhe. Tome 2*. Paris: GF-Flammarion, 1987c.
- _____. *Sur Baudelaire, Flaubert et Morand*. Paris: Éditions Complexe, 1987d.
- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *Émile, ou de l'éducation*. Paris: GF-Flammarion, 1966.
- Schleiermacher, Friedrich. *Discours sur la religion*. Aubier: Éditions Mouton, 1944.
- Schopenhauer, Arthur. *Le monde comme volonté et représentation. Tome I*. Paris: Gallimard, 2009.
- Souday, Paul. *Marcel Proust*. Paris: Simon Kra, 1927.
- Tressler, Beth. "Waking Dreams: George Eliot and the Poetics of Double Consciousness." *Victorian Literature and Culture* 39 (2011): 483-498.

Learning from Dr. Dre: Teaching Aesthetics and Art Theory to Artists

MAX RYYNÄNEN

Abstract

A major part of the work of most people in the academy consists of teaching, and theory teachers in art schools do not differ here from the main paradigm. Supervision is everywhere an essential part of teaching, although in art schools its role is even bigger, following the studio tradition of art teaching, where teachers often spent whole days working with their (e.g. painting) students. As an art school/(university) theory teacher, I also in some sense co-design the student's graduate work, as I take part in such a fundamental way in the building of the theses. Why is this? Students at the thesis level are less 'ready' for writing the theses in art schools than in science universities, following the fact that their theoretical studies often take place only after BA level – and still even then theory is just a margin in their education. This leads to a different role for the teacher, who has to turn into a living library providing ideas, concepts and materials during the process. Can we think of the work of the art school theory teachers as something at least closely analogous to the work that an executive producer does? Executive producers are central for example in rap music, where they in some extreme cases engage in creating the whole musical track for the rapper. It is not that we'd think that they are the artists, but one can hardly underestimate their role in the process. I take the analogy of supervision and executive production as a reflective mirror for my inquiry on supervision. I hope to produce reflections and questions needed for a further study of theoretical supervision in art schools/ universities.

Keywords: education, art education, art varsities, art schools, rap music, hip hop, supervision

The student walks into the room. She is in the middle of a painful process of changing sex/gender. She also hates academic writing and desires to write poetically. She, increasingly he, has already worked out a series of artworks, where she goes into depth on this huge change in her/his life. The thing is that s/he has no texts s/he likes. "Have you ever read Hélène Cixous? I ask. "As I think you are very theoretical, there you would find another way writing than the main academic style you dislike." No? Well, what have you read, or is there something else that you have found that could support your work?" "No." I walk around the room and watch my bookshelf and think carefully what I could offer, something that could work for this type of an artist and something that would not just stimulate resistance. Besides Judith/Jack Halberstam's books I pick up some essays on sex/gender that I have printed for another supervision project – and I so hope that the student will find at least something that works. There is hardly anything one could force students to read in an art university, and there is no canon, there is no shared methodology.

This is a normal day at the office for me, really. I teach theory to artists, i.e. film makers, painters, designers and performance artists. Their topics have throughout the years varied from tropicality to shamanism, from textile art to museum cars, and the methodologies have ranged from analytic philosophy to semiotics, from Indian philosophy to phenomenology, queer theory and fashion studies.

It is not that someone, after four years of studying philosophy or sociology, could walk in and have a methodology, a theoretical position already at hand. Students at my job have a high level of artistic practice, but usually no research methods, no written sources and no idea on how to posit themselves theoretically, which makes the whole supervision dialogue very challenging from a theoretical point of view. (I read as broadly as I can to keep up with the situation.) Some have written hardly anything since they left high school so I have to revamp them to think that you could really do something with writing. Many of my students are into artistic research, and even if I teach three courses of theory in the MA programme I work in, theory is somehow also often just a supplement for the students, something that can be cut-and-pasted when one needs 'theoretical support' for artistic work, or something to play around with freely. Some students think of theory as a defence system, like karate, which they can use to shield off critique or prejudice. They want to use theory to explain what they do to a curator or a critic – or someone who is against what they do.

Sometimes, in the best case (for the teacher, who loves theory), the theoretical text of course also becomes an organic part of the artistic, curatorial work at stake. Some students also pick up theory as their main thing, and so their work changes. In that case, the end result of our dialogue is sometimes just text, and some of my students have left art behind them. They have become scholars only. But this is not the typical story. I recall, when I taught at science universities, that any kind of interest presented by a student would have meant a certain set of books read and methods chosen. There the student who came in with an interest in gender/sex came in with a bag full of books and s/he knew already how to approach the topic in writing. But art students have a different background. We, me and them, are not doing the same, which would be the case if we were having a dialogue in a department of aesthetics or cultural studies.

In some sense, when I was teaching at a science university, I showed what I do, or explained it, and the student attempted to do the same. You could think that it was like the mimetic tradition in old art schools. I showed the model. The student followed. But in art schools the students use theory for their own work nearly always in some sense as amateurs, as this is – this is a typical comment from them – 'not really their stuff'. As a theorist, in these dialogical moments, I of course learn a lot from my students too. I am getting knowledge straight from the scene and I learn about new movements, institutional problems that young artists face, and from time to time also about practical problems in art production. This has made me wiser in the arts. After 14 years in this job, I also perceive rapidly the philosophical potentials in the work of the student.

Working as a theory teacher in an art school, one really has to keep an open mind, methodologically speaking. I have to try to grasp every work and consider what theoretical material would be good reading for the student, and what would be something the student would be able to grasp. Often, to get the process going, I really need to think what could be "inspiring". And I have to – this definitely nails my role – have a very broad library in my head, and be very relaxed with different (often unorthodox) ways of applying theory. I have witnessed a (great) video work on Heidegger where two girls

were eating chewing gum. I have seen a variety of theories becoming installations. "This light here is Heidegger's *Lichtung*." "Max, the tapestry thing, its about Hegel."

And the process of supervising... What happens? We discuss. A lot. Following the way painting teachers have for centuries spent days with their students in the teaching studios, there is an expectance that the theory teacher also will spend a lot of time with the students. Sometimes we have spicy debates, as artists are often fanatical about their life projects, and some of them really have a hard time accepting critical reflection. One can also say that art culture is more open to emotional expression than academic culture. Often our discussion is just about finding texts which mirror the practice of the student, or sheds light on it. The students often desire to find a theoretical mirror image for their work. I suppose these things are really universal. But not me. I want to see more: argumentation, interpretation or then a way of using the texts artistically. Anyway, I am a living library, I am a method bank, and I am a co-traveller, maybe a bit like a co-artist, a second author of a manuscript...

I studied 93 credits of pedagogy, in two different programmes and on one summer course, but I did not receive any teaching on supervision. Also Ian Dowey notes in his article "Reflections on Academic Supervision" (2008) the nearly total lack of education for supervision. It was sometimes referred to, but the scenario was always the same, and it was really, really simplified (and idealistic, one could say): you had a teacher, who had all the knowledge, but who needed pedagogical skills, to somehow 'relocate' this knowledge from the head of the teacher to the head of the student. But that is not what my work is about, and I doubt how good this formula is for understanding any supervision. Barbara Kamler and Pat Thomson (2014, 158) say that "the supervisor embodies and mediates institutional and disciplinary cultures, conditions and conventions", and this idea of the role of a 'guide' to a whole world of scholarship is of a good reminder when the student follows the supervisor into this field, but in my case the role is still something different (too). I suppose these things are really universal.

The etymology of supervision, which unites the Latin *super* (above) and *videre* (to see), tells us at last something about the practice: it is the act or function of overseeing something or somebody, of course also about providing knowledge to someone, helping to organise tasks, maybe even enhance motivation, and, as university work is also about assessing students, about monitoring activity and results. One side of supervision seems to be lost, and that is the one I started the paper with. Where and how can we start discussing it, finding a way to frame it, so that we can grasp its possibilities? I have always been in favour of finding somewhat away analogies to help in reflection. And here we are thinking about this way of sharing the trip with the student, taking part in it. How about turning to rap music? Why rap? Since starting to listen to rap, I have always heard more than in other types of music about the role of the executive producer, and often, as a rap fan, I have recognised, while listening, that this must be produced by a producer I "know". They often leave a recognisable trace on the "product".

Watching the excellent hip hop history on Netflix, *Hip Hop Evolution* (Shad et al 2016-2019), I could not help getting back to admiring Dr. Dre, who produced many of my early adulthood's favourite records. I have never been a fan of Eminem, but his sound and overall image is a product of Dre's sensitivity. 50 Cent, Snoop Dog, Kendrick Lamar, Raekwon from Wu Tang Clan, Jay-Z, Gwen Stefani and Mary J. Blige (Ro 2007) also have "works" which strongly show the presence of Dre. There is a certain atmosphere there, a way of handling the beat, cutting-edge rhythm and the rappers often seem to rap a bit

more sharply when “working” for Dre. There are noises hijacked from traffic, radio and/or horror films, which intensify the thick and heavy texture of the soundscape.

I can imagine Eminem walking in, and Dre starting to work on background and the holistic life work. Am I like Dre? Someone said that he could see that I had been the supervisor of a thesis work. Are we talking about the same thing as in producing rap music, the touch of a producer(/supervisor)? At least the example of the producer takes us further than the hierarchical anti-creative scenarios presented in discussions of supervision in pedagogy.

“[...] Dre had the awestruck kid in his home studio. Dre sat near the Solid State Logic 4000E/G console, playing a dopey horn-laden track based on Labi Siffre’s ‘I Got The.’ Em created a hook (‘Hi, my name is Slim Shady.’) and lyric that described him and Dre as a team. Dre played another instrumental and Em had something for that, too, about smoking weed, taking pills, and dropping out of school. [...] Dre waited until Em finished a jeremiad against white Detroit group the Insane Clown Posse [‘When Hell Freezes Over’] then played another track. ‘Are you diggin’ this?’ he asked. ‘Yeah, I got a rhyme to spit to it.’” (Ro 2007, 159-160)

Someone who is doing their thing walks in and I start working on bringing that thing onto a second level, at least theoretically speaking, adding material and knowledge which the person does not possess. If Dre comes with beats and backgrounds, I come with methods and texts. One could say that I “play”, as a test (as I have seen the student’s genderdriven works of art) Judith Butler’s *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* and the student realises that this is exactly what they need for their “rap”. Or, the student comes out with a jeremiad against some of the class and race structures of the art world, and I start playing bell hooks’s *Outlaw Culture: Resisting Representations* to support it. Like executive rap producers, for example Dre (who started DJing outside his house in his early teens; Ro 2007, 4-5), I have no education for supervision, but I have learned it the “hard way” (not in any way claiming that this “hard way” would be comparable to Compton, LA, even if I am from the working class myself) – not from the streets, but from the challenging neoliberal reality of today’s fast-paced university world, where colleagues drop out on sick leave following their burnout every year. The end result is controlled by me and Dr. Dre to quite an extent (he releases material he feels is ready, I say at some point that you can leave this in now), but it is always about someone else, the artist/rapper doing something on their own, having the voice.

I would not think of myself as a co-author, but to some extent I think we need to even ask this question: How much can a supervisor be a co-author? In all supervision there is a sense of co-production. In some forms of supervision, this takes a stronger role. For some readers, this might sound like taking away some of the Gloria of the student’s work, but if executive producing does not – many producers are famous for their work – why would supervision then do it? It is no big news that philosophers have a role in co-steering lives, life works and careers, as we know for example from the ancients’ “philosophical supervision” of rulers (Confucius, Aristotle). Moreover, the dialogical mode of working has been fetishised right from the beginning of written (Southern) European philosophy, just to recall Plato’s work (on Socrates, who he appropriated for his own purposes, like a rapper appropriates an already dead soul singer).

Theorists often work with artists in art schools, and many major names have made a career while working in art universities and colleges. One could mention here for example Peter Sloterdijk, Umberto Eco, Camille Paglia and Eugenio Trias, but the list is really

long. Still, we do not yet have any public or even scholarly, reflective account of the way we theorists have an impact on artists and art as supervisors. Has anyone, for example, studied how Eco, Paglia and Trias have affected their students artistic work, or their thinking? I suppose no.

And if, for example, John Dewey thinks he is ameliorating art by changing our conception of art and aesthetic experience (1980), could one think that I am ameliorating art already in this educational dialogue, right from the beginning, when it is still in the process of developing into a professional practice? What could ameliorative work here mean? Maybe helping the artist to become more reflective and conceptually bright in their vision? In Arthur Danto's (1964) footsteps, one could ask if this is the moment when art sometimes becomes philosophy, long before the touch of the professional world of art and its art histories and "theoretical atmospheres", where Danto traces it.

The art world builds a great deal on art school education. Dewey wanted to free artistic practices and (aesthetic) experience from the constraints of the art system. So, he focused on experience. On the other hand, his museum critique nailed the problem with art museums, which, at least in his time, (to use a rap term) "killed" art works by cutting off their relationship to the lived world. Here is maybe an opening for us, if we want to find a way of discussing and developing the idea of this supervision as executive production with the help of classics. In some sense, our canons, matrixes – journals with their referees – and overtly (in a Freudian manner) anal interpretations of texts do not maybe have that much in connection with the living/original ways of reading or writing philosophy. One could write a Deweyan institutional critique of the academy and ask what philosophy is really about and if the institution supports our philosophical needs. Classics are quite often read in a stiff and dead way – analogous to the way paintings were put on the walls in an archiving manner in the Louvre in Dewey's time. In a sense, teaching theory for artists is – I am borrowing this banal (but good) expression from rap music – about "keeping it real". Rappers sometimes say that they come from the street. Artists who turn to theory could say: I come from art! This affects their way of reading philosophical classics about art. When Descartes is horrified about his phenomenologically sceptical thoughts in the *Discourse on Method*, art students read the text as an account of the sheer craziness of his practical project of doubting everything in his life, more than science university students, who taxonomise the text (one could even say that in our business you do taxidermy to classics), and focus only on the epistemological outcome. In some sense, the artist reading has at least a complementary truth to it, as for example Descartes' text also is an anxiety-driven adventure (this literary model of rationalist doubt was probably taken from Teresa of Aquila), which nails the fact that suspecting everything in everyday life is not just a small intellectual 'choice', but a project which experientially takes us further in a shocking way if we really start to apply it (and this is what Descartes did).

I do not mean that I would like to accentuate any ideas of authenticity, but that many classics and key texts of philosophy are philosophical in a passionate, artistic way, and in a way that shows an experimental attitude. Susan Sontag's "Notes on Camp", Clement Greenberg's "Avant-Garde and Kitsch", and for example bell hooks' *Outlaw Culture: Resisting Representations*, are about care, fostering a position in a problematic environment, and even about creating a life philosophy, although in the academy the texts are often just analysed as complex webs of true and false notions, or well-working and problematic argumentation. Are we true to the originals? (We do not have to be, but it might be a

good question to ask.) The aforementioned texts have anyway made my students happy. And recycling them for a theoretical art world audience which is also practically perplexed by issues, and passionately working on them hands-on, starts again to sound like an analogy of rap music. Most aestheticians and art theorists know the work of Richard Shusterman, who in *Pragmatist Aesthetics* (Shusterman 1992) accentuates the way that rap music recycles old classics to make them groovy again – living art – and I have sometimes felt that the way philosophical texts find a novel role in the art world comes close to this. Susan Sontag becomes live again, from being a piece in the idea historical machinery, as artists struggle to keep their work living and resonating with contemporary culture and society, and in this way, I might be like a DJ in my work, as I help the texts to become read as lively companions in artistic and curatorial production. As the executive producer of rap music (for example Dr. Dre) recycles music, the theorist philosopher here works on recycling theory; theory which will for sure change in its new context (and change the context too).

It is of course about a broader issue in the art scene. Attending a panel discussion or reading an exhibition catalogue, one finds philosophy the most important partner for dialogue for contemporary artists, although it is surprising how little this dialogue has so far extended into for example aesthetics – as many artists only want to discuss politics, climate change and gender. At the same time, they often have, in art schools, already inhaled aesthetics and art theory, to become part of their work on a deep level, so it might be invisible in the end result. Aesthetics thus comes in sneakily. Often only the surface is tagged with theorists like Antonio Negri and Chantal Mouffe. To understand this relationship of teaching aesthetics in art schools and the end result of the work of successful artists is at least one thing we might want to note. I just read an interview where a student of mine who runs a rock band, talks like Adorno, who was the key figure of his thesis which I supervised. When one looks at the increasingly anti-consumerist discursive production of the band, I can see and feel my touch there, in the work, like an executive producer can see/hear their touch in a rap piece – not as strongly in this case, but still. In the end, exploring the role of the “executive producer” in supervision has to be conducted with an eye on ethics.

Iwan Dowie discusses neatly the challenge of keeping distance from interesting theses and accentuates the ethical need for leaving the student “ownership” of their work even while teaching nursing students (Dowie 2008, 36). Art university teaching, though, differs from most academic work, as the students do not actually, often already at the BA level, create sketchy inquiries to support their future work, nor do they simulate real work: their productions are already part of their life work, and sometimes presented in central venues for art. In the museum, the role of the supervisor will (maybe already during the studies) to some extent be taken by a curator/mediator of art. Kamler and Thomson (2014, 22) suggest that thesis writing is a task differing substantially from other scholarly writing practices, but even this becomes blurred in an art university environment, where the authors have more freedom for experimental writing and where the writing also often becomes an integral part of the artistic production. It might be that the only difference between their dissertation and their later work is the presence (and impact) of the supervisor.

Should we theorise this topic, work more to understand it, and should we try to find ways of developing it – and in the end: should we at least give a thought to giving more credit to the theory supervisor in arts? I think so, yes. I realize I am a kind of a “figure”

(and male, if that helps – already old enough too), and, at least partly following this, I think I get credited quite often in some sense, but not all of us receive as much of a response as we should. Thinking about the education of aestheticians, art educators and art theorists: how could we offer support for the students who will work one day with artists, if not in art schools then at least in the art scene? Could we build systematic methods for this or a good set of background facts to share on a course? Are there dangers in the practice, or problems that we have not yet mapped out in this preliminary analysis? Can we audit the practice? And how does one document this in a portfolio? Or should everything continue to happen organically as it has done for ages? Could one write a history of the theoretical supervision of artists and its impact? One could, and we might even need this idea historical work to really understand the impact of this work.

Theoretical art school teaching is all over the place when we engage with the products of education in arts, i.e. the art works. Yes, I think that there is a lot of interesting work to be done here, and I am sure more questions will arise if we take up the challenge. For this paper, the scope needs to be kept narrow, as this is more of a proposal. I have aspired to convince you that there is an issue at stake, which might connect teaching theory to artists to the executive production of rap music, and even more, lead, if studied well, to a deeper understanding of art, art education and supervision.

There's one more layer to it, of course. If the philosopher here enters artistic production as an executive producer, we might have to think of philosophy itself, now through this extension, as a form of art. As we have here made it clear, the role of the philosopher here is not just a source of inspiration. It is one collaborator in the production itself. I have only showed what the philosophy of education might need to learn from this. Philosophy itself, and maybe art too, might be the next fields, where the fruits of this might have to be discussed.

Aalto University, Finland

(Thank you, Slavka Kopackova. This talk was originally presented in the conference Teaching Aesthetics in Presov 2019 at the University of Presov. Another less edited version, with a bit of a different outcome, will be published as a part of the proceedings of the conference.)

References

- Danto, Arthur C (1964). The Art World. *Journal of Philosophy* 61, 571-584.
 Dewey, John (1980). *Art as Experience*. New York: Perigee Books.
 Dowie, Ian (2008) Reflections on Academic Supervision. *Nursing Standard* 23(11): 35-38.
 Shad (Host) and R. Peters, S. McFadyen, S. Dunn and N. George (Producers.) *Hip Hop Evolution* 2016-2019. HBO Canada / Netflix. 12 episodes. Documentary.
 Kamler, Barbara and Thomson, Pat (2014). *Helping Doctoral Students Write: Pedagogies for Supervision*. Oxon: Routledge.
 Ro, Ronin (2007). *Dr. Dre: The Biography*. New York: Thunder's Mouth Press.
 Shusterman, Richard (1992). *Pragmatist Aesthetics*. London: Blackwell.

The Play's *das Thing*: On the Incommensurability of Arendtian Political Action and the Kantian Sublime

RYAN MITCHELL WITTINGSLOW

Abstract

Drawing upon Hannah Arendt's political reimagining of Kant's aesthetics and Kant's analysis of 'enthusiasm' as a modality of the sublime, I demonstrate in this paper how the Kantian sublime is incompatible with Arendt's conception of political action.

Keywords: sublime, beauty, Nazism, politics, Kant, Arendt

Introduction

Jean-François Lyotard, in 'Postscript to Terror and the Sublime', writes that "there is no such thing" as a politics of the sublime. Instead, "it could only be terror".¹ Nonetheless, a number of commentators (including Jacques Rancière,² Gilles Deleuze,³ and Michael Shapiro⁴) have tried to forge a politics of the sublime: a sublime that, rather than being terrifying, instead affords us the opportunity to radically imagine the world anew.

While I do not disagree with analyses and programmes of this sort in principle, I am sympathetic to Lyotard's concerns. It is that sympathy which drives this paper. Drawing upon Hannah Arendt's political reimagining of Kant's aesthetics, Kant's analysis of 'enthusiasm' as a modality of the sublime, and a case study of the Nazi Thingspiel movement, I demonstrate in this paper that the Kantian sublime is incompatible with Arendt's conception of political action.

The Agora

Drawing from the work of Hannah Arendt, when I speak of 'political action', I mean something quite specific: the action of the *vita activa*, or 'politically active life'. I will explain.

In both *The Human Condition* and "Labor, Work, Action", Arendt claims that 'labour', 'work', and 'action' are the three modes that, in the aggregate, constitute our shared existential condition. Labour is the most foundational, being the mode that we share with non-human creatures. Composed of activities like eating, mating, and sleeping, it denotes the cyclical "metabolism between man and nature" through which we guarantee our continued existence.⁵ However, while labour is self-sustaining, it leaves no lasting impression upon the world. The goods of labour, such as they are, are denuded and impermanent. They readily decay or disintegrate into nothingness, reclaimed anew by the world.

The second mode, work, concerns the objects that we make. Unlike (most) other animals, which are without any kind of real material culture, human beings are *homo faber*, or 'man the maker'. The made objects that constitute this material culture serve a dual

purpose. First, they serve to make our lives easier, ameliorating some of our material difficulties, organising our behaviours, and amplifying our capacities in given ways. Second, by virtue of providing these affordances, the objects of our material culture moor us to the world in a way that the products of labour do not. As Arendt writes, "the things of the world have the function of stabilizing human life [...]. Against the subjectivity of men stands the objectivity of the man-made artifice, not the indifference of nature".⁶

The third and final mode, action, is the realm of the political, of the agora. It is also the existential mode with which the rest of this analysis is concerned. Whereas labour and work are fundamentally private in that they are (under Arendt's conceptualisation) basically solitary activities, they also provide the existential and material foundation whereupon social and political life can take place. Moreover, it is only once our more basic needs are addressed that we can begin to engage seriously in the normative activities that constitute the *vita activa* or 'politically active life', both free from "the inequality present in rulership" and free to "move in a sphere where neither rule nor being ruled existed".⁷ The realm of action is also the realm of newness, of novelty. Because true actors are free of material constraints thanks to the modes of labour and work, actors themselves are fundamentally undetermined. Arendt writes:

[...] the consequences of each deed are boundless, every action touches off not only a reaction but a chain reaction, every process is the cause of unpredictable new processes [...] one deed, one gesture may suffice to change every constellation.⁸

However, while it is *The Human Condition* and "Labor, Work, Action" that contain the most influential descriptions of political action, it is in *Between Past and Future* that Arendt teases out the conceptual mechanisms that underlie it. Building upon Kant's description of beauty in *The Critique of Judgement*, Arendt argues that in Kant's analysis lie the seeds of a normative political programme.

In *The Critique of Judgement*, Kant argues that beauty, properly conceptualised, has four features (what he calls 'moments'). Briefly, they are as follows:

1. Judgements of beauty are based upon disinterested pleasure, being unmotivated by desire.⁹
2. Judgements of beauty appear rationally motivated in that those judgements look like the normal activity in which we engage when we apply concepts. Nonetheless, this is not the case, because Kant thinks that concepts cannot be fully applied to beautiful things. The tension between the mechanisms of concept-application and the conceptual elusiveness of beautiful things means that beautiful things look rational without being so. Kant calls this feature of beautiful things 'lawfulness without a law'.¹⁰
3. Judgements of beauty are not premised upon the extent to which something is fit for a given purpose. Nonetheless, beautiful things look as if they have purpose. Consequently, Kant argues that beautiful things possess 'purposiveness without purpose'.¹¹
4. Finally, judgements of beauty are normative in that they implicitly demand that everyone who perceives the object ought also judge the object beautiful.¹²

All four of these moments, acting in concert, facilitate the most important feature of the beautiful: what Kant calls the 'free play' of the faculties. When engaging in free play, Kant argues that the imagination is unconstrained by the limits imposed by determinate concepts because there is nothing, per moment 2 and 3, that tells you what an object is or how it should be used. He writes: "The cognitive powers brought into play by this representation are here engaged in a free play, since no determinate concept restricts them to a particular rule of cognition".¹³

Arendt's insight is that judgements of beauty, as Kant conceptualises them, are relevantly similar to political claims in that both imply the existence of free play. Per moment 1, they must both be disinterested: in the case of beauty, one cannot be a true judge if your interests or desires are capable of impinging upon your judgement; in the case of the latter, participating in the realm of action requires that your interests are addressed within the modes of labour and work. Per moments 2 and 3, both judgements of beauty and political claims exhibit lawfulness without a law and purposiveness without purpose in that there is no set of objective concepts that we can apply, nor is there a set of rules or standards by which they can be assessed. Finally, per moment 4, both judgements of beauty and political claims are normative in that they demand, but cannot guarantee, agreement.

This means, for instance, that saying, "I think that such-and-such is beautiful" is modally equivalent to the claim that, "I think that so-and-so is the best way to live", in that they are both non-binding and normative statements premised upon free play. It also means that both judgements of beauty and political claims are public facts: in order for them to have any normative traction, they both need to be introduced as objects of analysis into the agora. As a consequence, both judgements of beauty and the politics of the agora, Arendt argues, are subsumed within the power of aesthetic judgement: a power that "rests on a potential agreement with others".¹⁴

What it means to engage meaningfully with the normative claims of other people is to enlarge our own mentalities; armed with free play, we are able to liberate ourselves from the blinkers of our own attitudes and inclinations and thus engage in political action. Moreover, with free play, the power of aesthetic judgement is a power that requires constant and careful cultivation, grounded in the common world that we all share. Arendt writes: "In aesthetic no less than in political judgments, a decision is made, and although this decision is always determined by a certain subjectivity, [...] it also derives from the fact that the world itself is an objective datum, something common to all its inhabitants".¹⁵

Arendt is not the only person to have made arguments of this sort: Friedrich Schiller,¹⁶ Herbert Marcuse,¹⁷ and Tobin Siebers,¹⁸ among others, have all pointed out the virtues of Kantian judgements of beauty when seeking to work out how we might adequately conceive of political action in an ideal sense. In all cases, it is the free play implied by aesthetic judgement upon which political action is premised. This is because free play helps us imagine what it is like to be other people, and to conceive of the limitations of our own normative positions. It also serves to guide the process by which we find agreement with one another, collectively discerning the values that we wish to pursue as a polis. Consequently, as a governing principle, free play helps midwife an agora that is pluralistic, democratic, richly interpersonal, and inherently non-coercive. Or, as Tobin Siebers writes:

Aesthetic judgment, then, provides the perfect analogy by which to imagine ideal forms of political judgment. It offers the experience of a free political space, a space of intersubjectivity, in which a multitude of thinking people are dedicated to an open discussion—unbound by previously existing prejudices—and committed to reaching an agreement acceptable to all.¹⁹

Obviously, aesthetic judgement offers a utopian vision of both the material conditions under which political action manifests, and the norms that govern collective decision-making. Nonetheless, from this brief exegesis we can say that political action, even under less-than-utopian circumstances, must permit the possibility of free play. Without it, we lack the conceptual breathing room to make normative and yet non-binding judgements under the aegis of lawfulness without a law and purposiveness without purpose.

Consequently, free play is a necessary condition that must be met before we are able to engage in the kind of political action that Arendt describes.

The Sublime

But what of the Kantian sublime and its relation to Arendtian political action? Although the sublime escapes easy definition, we can describe it as a species of spiritual grandeur that evades any serious attempt to make sense of it. Shared amongst accounts of the sublime is a view that the sublime is all at once a feeling of commingled delight, joy, terror, and dismay in the face of overwhelming power. Consider, for instance, the terrific and tremulous beginning of Rainer Maria Rilke's *The Duino Elegies* (for my money one of the most sublime poems ever written):

Who, if I cried out, would hear me among the angels'
hierarchies? and even if one of them pressed me
suddenly against his heart: I would be consumed
in that overwhelming existence. For beauty is nothing
but the beginning of terror, which we are still just able to endure,
and we are so awed because it serenely disdains
to annihilate us. Every angel is terrifying.²⁰

Despite the vast preponderance of both analyses and expressions of the sublime (and fittingly, given the literature that we have covered thus far), it is Kant's analysis that has proven the most influential. He defines the sublime as a kind of experience that profoundly exceeds our capacity to make sense of it. As he writes in *The Critique of Judgment*, the sublime is "the mere capacity of thinking which evidences a faculty of mind transcending every standard of sense".²¹ It is the feeling we experience when our *a priori* forms of sensible intuition—that is, our intuitions of space and/or time—are violated. These intuitions, he claims, can be violated in two different ways: via experiences of overwhelming power (what Kant calls the 'dynamical' sublime) and experiences of overwhelming space (what Kant calls the 'mathematical' sublime).²²

As Jean-François Lyotard argues, Kant's sublime rests on the perceived tension between 'imagination' (the intellectual capacities that organise and make sense of what we perceive), and rationality (that which sets the conceptual limits upon what we believe can be the case). So, while my reason might tell me that something very large or very powerful is bounded in some way if only for the reason that *all* things are bounded in some way, my imagination is incapable of discerning *where* and *how* that thing is bounded.

This tension—what Lyotard calls the 'differend'—is "the heart of sublime feeling: at the encounter of the two 'absolutes' equally 'present' to thought, the absolute whole when it conceives, the absolutely measured when it presents".²³ It is as a consequence of this incommensurability that the sublime makes obvious the torn and ragged edges of our conceptual capacities, and in so doing offers a "transport that leads all thought (critical thought included) to its limits".²⁴

In making clear the inadequacy of our senses and the incommensurability of those senses with reason, the Kantian sublime also makes clear to us the powers of our cognitive abilities. Faced with a sublime thing, all you can do is know that you are *not* that thing. For Kant, this is the location of true sublimity: faced with an experience of excess, we are able, if nothing else, to affirm our own selfhood. Although very small and powerless, we have power enough to individuate, experiencing a kind of joy in our unconditioned and wild experience.

The word 'unconditioned' is important because it gives Kant room to tie the sublime with the good. Faced with the differend between imagination and rationality, we are left free and adrift of preconceptions and inclinations. This, Kant thinks, naturally puts us in a perfect position to discover the moral law outlined elsewhere in his philosophical programme, and thus be better able to act in service to the good. Our inclinations and preferences, having been humiliated by the sublime into the experience of empowered joy, open us to the possibility of acting according to ideal, 'unconditioned',²⁵ non-sensuous principles. In this way, Kant's account of the sublime clearly illustrates his Enlightenment commitments: after all, for all the sublime's grandeur, it really only serves to reinforce the power and acuity of unconditioned intellect.

But what happens if the sublime experience does not open us to unconditioned and non-sensuous principles? The answer lies in what Kant calls 'enthusiasm'. At least on the surface, enthusiasm is indiscernible from the sublime. To be enthusiastic for something, using the Kantian nomenclature, is to be gripped by an unrepresentable idea, or a set of unrepresentable ideas, much larger than yourself. The effect of these ideas persists across time in a way that overrides our preferences or inclinations. Or, as Kant writes, "from an aesthetic point of view, enthusiasm is sublime, because it is an effort of one's powers called forth by ideas which give to the mind an impetus of far stronger and more enduring efficacy than the stimulus afforded by sensible representations".²⁶

However, this is not to say that enthusiasm and the unconditioned sublime are identical. Sublime feeling is a consequence of the rational process by which we individuate in the face of overwhelming phenomena. As a consequence, it is a product of 'reason'; that is, a product of our "faculty of principles", of which "the unconditioned is the ultimate goal at which it aims".²⁷ Meanwhile, Kant argues that enthusiasm is not and cannot be unconditioned. Instead, while enthusiasm shares some common features with the sublime, it is better understood as one of the ways in which the moral law can be connected with feeling; it is "the idea of the good connected with affect".²⁸

As distinct from 'passions', which can be mastered, Kant describes 'affects' as emotional states that do not permit the possibility of self-reflection.²⁹ Instead, Kantian affect is an instance of pure, unreflexive, and unmediated *feeling*; certainly not the product of the unconditioned 'faculty of principles'. He writes: "every affect is blind either as to the choice of its end, or, supposing this has been furnished by reason, in the way it is effected".³⁰ Enthusiasm then, as "the idea of the good connected with affect", is a merely *aesthetic* expression or modality of the sublime: a sublime stripped of reason and, consequently, moral valence. Moreover, although it may take the form of the good, this form is purely accidental; there is nothing that guarantees that enthusiasm will be good, because it is insufficiently unconditioned to make the relevant moral judgements.

All of this means that enthusiasm walks a narrow and dangerous path. Although fully capable of adhering to the moral law (and indeed, Kant is actually quite optimistic about the good-making potential of enthusiasm, as he explains in *The Conflict of the Faculties, in Religion and Rational Theology*),³¹ it is dangerous because we cannot ensure that it will. It is mercurial, wild, *delirious*.³² It is also socially efficacious. Whipped into a mad, affective, unreflective frenzy by some set of unrepresentable ideas, an enthusiastic polis can become unmoored from the moral law and descend into a potent kind of madness, seeking to bring those unrepresentable ideas into actuality. As Lyotard writes:

Enthusiasm is a modality of the feeling of the sublime. The imagination tries to supply a direct, sensible presentation for an Idea of Reason. [...] It does not succeed and it thereby

feels its impotence, but at the same time, it discovers its destination, which is to bring itself into harmony with the Ideas of Reason through an appropriate present.³³

The Thing

An example of enthusiasm in action might be helpful. Rising above Heidelberg, on the north side of the Neckar river, is the 'Heiligenberg': in English, the 'Holy Mountain'. At the peak of the Heiligenberg is a large public amphitheatre made from grey stone blocks. Designed by Hermann Alker and completed in 1935, the Heidelberg Thingstätte possesses the heavily, masculine grandeur of so many public buildings from the Nazi era. Capable of holding some 20,000 people, it is also an excellent example of the architecture of the 'Thingspiel' movement (1933 to 1937).

Although a cognate with the standard German word *Ding* (which along with English 'thing', Dutch *ding*, and so on, refers to a thing or an object), the German word *Thing*—derived ultimately, like *Ding*, from the Old Norse *þing*—refers to a particular kind of communal assembly: "a gathering", in the words of Martin Heidegger, "and specifically a gathering to deliberate on a matter under discussion, a contested matter".³⁴ These assemblies functioned as both social and judicial gatherings: places where seasonal celebrations would occur and public judgements be rendered. Adopted into the milieu of Nazism, the word *Thing* developed distinctly racist overtones. In connoting "the sacred assembly site of the pre-Christian Germanic tribes", as Glen Gladberry writes, a *Thing* in Nazi parlance was transformed into a place where "the racially unified people (*das Volk*) passed judgement".³⁵

It is in light of this cultural inheritance that theatre scholar Carl Niessen first put forth the notion of a *Thingspiel*: that is, a 'Thing play'. In a speech delivered in 1933, he presented the *Thingspiel* as a new and uniquely National Socialist *Gesamtkunstwerk* (total work of art), uniting both performance and politics. In this way, it was hoped that *Thingspiele* would prove an appropriate expression and encouragement of the *Volksgemeinschaft* in a way that democracy did not.

However, it was the journalist and *Reichsdramaturg* Rainer Schlösser, in cooperation with dramatist Eberhard Wolfgang Möller, who really codified the *Thing* play. Combining oratorio, procession, pantomime, and dance, and inspired by the neopagan dramas of Ernst Wachler, the intention behind a *Thingspiel* was to forge drama and *völkisch* ideology into a single coherent form: a mystery play "using appropriate material to create a total work of art that is close to the people", as Martin Swales and Karl-Heinz Schoeps write, providing "mystical underpinnings for the new state".³⁶

As William Niven observes, if Modernist drama is an exercise in defamiliarisation or 'making strange', then *Thingspiele* "aimed at refamiliarisation". Indeed, he writes, "actors and audience were as one, participants in a dramatic acting out of the German soul".³⁷ It was to be the ultimate artform: a "syncretic experience of inimitable immensity".³⁸ Nor was this lost on the playwrights themselves. As *Thingspiel* writer Richard Euringer claimed, the point of a *Thing* play is "[c]ult, not 'art'".³⁹ Or, as Schlösser declared:

*The longing is for a drama that intensifies historical events to create a mythical, universal, unambiguous reality beyond reality. Only someone who knows this longing will be able to create the cultic people's drama of the future.*⁴⁰

This mythic impetus means that *Thingspiele* share a cluster of thematic and narrative features—although, as Niven points out, working out what is and isn't a *Thing* play is a

matter of some conjecture.⁴¹ Each is filled with lamentations that the steely and Romantic German spirit has been harmed by the degeneracies of the Weimar Republic (whether Jewish, socialist, internationalist, liberal democratic, feminist, or otherwise); each presents the thesis that the true German spirit can only be restored via a robust commitment to National Socialism; and each argues that once these problems are addressed, there will be “a coming together of all classes, whose differences are forgotten as they recognize what they have in common, namely their Germanness”.⁴²

As part of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, it was deemed that these performances required custom-made venues; when attempting to forge a cultic vision of the German ethnostate, not just any old tat will do. And so, in line with both Niessen’s initial vision and the Romantic font from which völkisch ideology emerges, the Nazi Propaganda Ministry began building *Thingplätze* (‘Thing places’) all over Germany, in sites invested “with the same sacred spirit which was felt had been associated with the ancient *Thing*”.⁴³

The Heidelberg Thingstätte is one such *Thingplatz*. Although other *Thingplätze* certainly trump it in terms of size, its location bestows upon it an undeniable grandeur: built at the apex of the Holy Mountain, with Heidelberg laid out like a medieval jewel on the Neckar below, the sense of drama is palpable. And indeed, it appears to have been thought equally impressive at its unveiling in 1935. Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels, speaking at the opening, described the Thingstätte as “National Socialism in stone”; indeed it gave “a living, tangible, and monumental expression” to the Nazi concept of life.⁴⁴

In short, these plays present a sublime vision, both of the German state and of Germanness itself. The Romantic heroes of *Thingspiele* are subsumed into the overwhelming will of the nation: a nation forged from ‘authentic’ blood and soil, rather than from the thin and toothless legalisms of liberal democracy. Moreover, because members of the audience were expected to participate in *Thing* plays, this exercise in nation-building was to be shared by all present: a vast and mythic call to action intended to blunt any response but uncritical devotion:

Our German land needs deeds,
Enough words have been spoken.
Germany, you most beautiful of lands,
It is to you we dedicate the work of our hands!
We serve you with the spade,
Because we are soldiers, work soldiers.⁴⁵

As a consequence, *Thingspiele* are an excellent example of objects capable of stimulating—and indeed, designed to stimulate—feelings of Kantian enthusiasm. They offer a conditioned form of the sublime, premised upon a mythic, cultic, unrepresentable vision of a Germany that is founded upon a deep and ineffable ontology.

Conclusion

Let’s take stock. Earlier, I argued that free play was a necessary condition for political action, as Arendt describes it, to manifest. Meanwhile, per Kant, we can say that the sublime proper induces unconditioned experience, while enthusiasm constitutes a conditioned experience of the sublime. Is Arendtian political action commensurable with either of these sublimes, whether unconditioned or conditioned? The answer is no, for (at least) three reasons.

First, Arendtian political action is incompatible with the unconditioned sublime due to the phenomenological orientation of Kantian beauty. This is because the experience of

beauty requires an object: some *something* (even if it is a conceptual or abstract something, like 'liberty', or the nation, or the number seven) that serves as the object of attention. However, this condition does not hold for the unconditioned sublime. Because of the incommensurable differend between what we experience and what we conceptualise, an experience of the unconditioned sublime categorically *cannot* have an object. Indeed, experiences of the unconditioned sublime sunder our intentional horizons, leaving nothing in their wake.⁴⁶ This is what Kant means when he says that the sublime is 'unconditioned': it is unconditioned because there is no identifiable object to condition it. Plainly then, Arendtian political action is incommensurable with the unconditioned sublime, for the very good reason that political action of the sort that Arendt describes is premised upon the proper functioning of free play. Given that free play requires an object or objects to function properly, and given that experiences of the unconditioned sublime hinge upon the dissolution of objects, it is obvious that free play and the unconditioned sublime are categorically at odds.

Second, Arendtian political action is also incompatible with enthusiasm, the conditioned sublime. Enthusiasm differs from the unconditioned sublime by virtue of the fact it has an object: it is conditioned by some thing or concept. However, the mere fact that enthusiasm possesses an object does not mean that it is reconcilable with Arendtian political action. That is because the object—in our test case, a mythic, cultic, unrepresentable vision of Germany—is much too vast and incoherent to be adequately conceptualised. This means that it cannot be properly embedded within our *a priori* forms of sensible intuition (such as space and time). It also means that making sense of that object looks nothing like the normal activity in which we engage when we apply concepts, and thus the mythic, cultic, unrepresentable vision of Germany categorically cannot fulfil the condition of appearing lawful without a law. Naturally, both of these conditions must be met in order for free play to be stimulated: a free play that is the foundation of Arendtian political action.

Finally, there is at least one good reason why Arendtian political action is incommensurable with *any* kind of sublime, whether unconditioned or not. Kant's first moment makes clear that beauty is a species of 'disinterested liking', in that an assessment of a beautiful thing is not complicated by or motivated by a desire for that beautiful thing. This disinterest is one of the necessary conditions that need to be met before we can experience free play. Meanwhile, we simply cannot experience sublime things in a disinterested way; although we cannot be afraid when experiencing the sublime, we very much need to understand that sublime things are appropriate objects of fear. As Kant writes, the aspect of sublime things "is all the more attractive for its fearfulness; and we readily call these objects sublime, because they raise the forces of the soul above the height of vulgar commonplace".⁴⁷ This obviously poses a problem for anyone hoping to reconcile the Kantian sublime with Arendtian political action: the manipulative power of the commingled fear and desire that Kant identifies as integral to the sublime is fundamentally incommensurable with the disinterest integral to beauty.

Consequently, and by means of a conclusion: the Kantian sublimities, whether conditioned or unconditioned, are categorically incommensurable with Arendt's conception of political action. Although I don't know if this means that the politics of the sublime "could only be terror", per Lyotard, it certainly problematises any attempt to reconcile the sublime with the democratic potential of aesthetic judgements and free play.

Notes

- ¹ Jean-François Lyotard, "Postscript to Terror and the Sublime," in *The Postmodern Explained: Correspondence, 1982-1985* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 71.
- ² Jacques Rancière, "Aesthetic Separation, Aesthetic Community," in *The Emancipated Spectator*, trans. Gregory Elliott (New York: Verso, 2011), 51-82.
- ³ Gilles Deleuze, "The Method of Dramatization," in *Desert Islands and Other Texts, 1953-1974* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2004), 94-116.
- ⁴ Michael J. Shapiro, *The Political Sublime* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018).
- ⁵ Hannah Arendt, "Labor, Work, Action," in *The Portable Hannah Arendt*, ed. Peter Baehr (London: Penguin, 2000), 170.
- ⁶ Hannah Arendt, "Labor, Work, Action", 173.
- ⁷ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago & London: Chicago University Press, 1998), 33.
- ⁸ Hannah Arendt, "Labor, Work, Action", 180.
- ⁹ Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, secs. 1-5.
- ¹⁰ Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, secs. 6-9.
- ¹¹ Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, secs. 11-17.
- ¹² Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, secs. 18-22.
- ¹³ Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, 45.
- ¹⁴ Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future: Six Exercises in Political Thought* (New York: Viking Press, 1961), 220.
- ¹⁵ Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, 222.
- ¹⁶ Friedrich Schiller, "Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man," in *Essays*, ed. Daniel O. Dahlstrom and Walter Hinderer, trans. Elizabeth M. Wilkinson and L. A. Willoughby (New York: Continuum, 1993), 86-178.
- ¹⁷ Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955); and Herbert Marcuse, *The Aesthetic Dimension: Toward a Critique of Marxist Aesthetics* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1978).
- ¹⁸ Tobin Siebers, "Kant and the Politics of Beauty," *Philosophy and Literature* 22, no. 1 (1994).
- ¹⁹ Tobin Siebers, "Kant and the Politics of Beauty", 46.
- ²⁰ Rainer Maria Rilke, *The Duino Elegies & The Sonnets to Orpheus*, trans. Stephen Mitchell (New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2014), 3.
- ²¹ Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, ed. Nicholas Walker, trans. James Creed Meredith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 97-98.
- ²² Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, secs. 23-29.
- ²³ Jean-François Lyotard, *Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime*, trans. Elizabeth Rottenberg (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 123.
- ²⁴ Jean-François Lyotard, *Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime: x*.
- ²⁵ Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, 101.
- ²⁶ Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, 102.
- ²⁷ Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, 228.
- ²⁸ Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, 102.
- ²⁹ Immanuel Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, trans. Robert B. Loudon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 149.
- ³⁰ Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, 102.
- ³¹ Cf. Immanuel Kant, *The Conflict of the Faculties*, in *Religion and Rational Theology*, ed. Allen W. Wood and George Di Giovanni, trans. Mary J. Gregor and Robert Anchor (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001).
- ³² Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, 105.
- ³³ Jean-François Lyotard, *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute*, trans. Georges Van Den Abbeele (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 165.

- ³⁴ Martin Heidegger, "The Thing", in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 174.
- ³⁵ Glen Gadberry, "The Thingspiel and Das Frankenberger Würfelspiel," *The Drama Review: TDR* 24, no. 1 (1980), 104.
- ³⁶ Martin Swales and Karl-Heinz Schoeps, *Literature and Film in the Third Reich* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2004), 153.
- ³⁷ William Niven, "The Birth of Nazi Drama?: *Thing Plays*," in *Theatre Under the Nazis*, ed. John London (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2000), 57-58.
- ³⁸ William Niven, "The Birth of Nazi Drama?: *Thing Plays*", 59.
- ³⁹ Richard Euringer, quoted in William Niven, "The Birth of Nazi Drama?: *Thing Plays*", 58.
- ⁴⁰ Rainer Schlösser, quoted in Martin Swales and Karl-Heinz Schoeps, *Literature and Film in the Third Reich*, 153.
- ⁴¹ William Niven, "The Birth of Nazi Drama?: *Thing Plays*", 59-61.
- ⁴² William Niven, "The Birth of Nazi Drama?: *Thing Plays*", 65.
- ⁴³ Glen Gadberry, "The Thingspiel and Das Frankenberger Würfelspiel", 105.
- ⁴⁴ Joseph Goebbels, quoted in William Niven, "The Birth of Nazi Drama?: *Thing Plays*", 56.
- ⁴⁵ Erich Müller-Schnick, *Soldaten der Scholle*, quoted in William Niven, "The Birth of Nazi Drama?: *Thing Plays*", 65.
- ⁴⁶ Cf. Ryan Wittingslow, "Effing the Ineffable: The Sublime in Postphenomenology", *Techné: Research in Philosophy and Technology* (August 4 2020), doi: 10.5840/techne202082127.
- ⁴⁷ Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, 91.

Bridging the Gaps: Towards a New Paradigmatic Interface of Translation Studies and Comparative Literature

OINDRI ROY

Abstract

The paper explores the possibilities of new theories in comparative literature through the tenets of translation studies. In doing so, it looks into the turbulence in the relational space between translation studies and comparative literature. There have been prior attempts to incorporate the praxis of translation into comparative literature. The present study seeks to approach Comparative Literature through theoretical ideations from translation studies. In the given academic scenario, both the disciplines need to explore newer avenues of knowledge as a means of sustenance. The paper argues that the inversion of the traditional academic relationship, that subverts hegemonic knowledge-formation shall expand the boundaries of both fields of studies through theoretical interrelations as well as text-based examples.

Keywords: translation studies, comparative literary theories, poly-system and comparativism, new theoretical tenets of literary criticism.

Introduction: The Relationship: Past and Present

Comparative Literature has always had a relationship characterized by turbulence with Translation Studies, as another distinctive field of knowledge. While ostensibly both group of academicians, comparatists and translation theorists, deal with the juxtaposition of literary compositions from various cultural spaces, there can be perceived an essential difference in the modalities of their knowledge formation. The early years of Comparative Literary Studies require the original texts to be read in the original languages, and translated texts could only be of secondary readability as “translation means carrying over a piece of foreign language into one’s own” unlike “comparison” which allows “to step into the other’s language without carrying it across, and thus respecting the otherness of languages and cultures” as Stanley Corngold (2005) writes.

This belief gained ground in the early years of comparativism which employed a binary model of research: it would require the original texts to be read in the original languages, and translated texts could only be of inferior readability. Translation studies was, as Bassnett puts it, “a poor relation” of comparative literature. It was in the 1970s that the attitude began to change, due to certain scholastic endeavors: In “Translation Theory Today” (1978), Itamar Even Zohar was one of the firsts to suggest a systematic approach in thinking about the praxis translation:

[W]e [have] been tortured by clichés ... that translation is never equal to the original, that languages differ from one another, that culture is ‘also’ involved with translation procedures, that when a translation is exact it tends to be ‘literal’ and hence loses the spirit of the original, that the meaning of a text means both ‘content’ and ‘style’, and so on. (5)

In fact, the offensive against the rather incoherent critique of translation as the producer of the spurious provided a ground for looking into the methodologies of translation studies so that it could be constructed into a discipline as much as comparative literature. With the rise of feminist critique of language in the 1980s, concepts of 'fidelity' to the language or 'betrayal' of poetic senses in translated texts were questioned. Lori Chamberlain drew an analogy between the patrilineal kinship system and the superiority of the source text over the translation. Barbara Johnson writes about 'rereading' through translated texts and subverting 'certainties' upheld by the original text. Subsequently poststructuralist critics also determined the fallacy of believing in the single, conclusive reading of the texts which began to acquire semantic plurality. The "death" of the author had already been proclaimed by Roland Barthes so that the ownership of all original texts were challenged; finally, Derrida's *What Is a Relevant Translation?* (2001) had validated the ethics of translation in the untranslatability of the text i.e. admitting the lack of the language a text is being translated to and hence deriving the functionality of the text from this lack: "As a matter of fact, I don't believe that anything can ever be untranslatable or, moreover, translatable." (258)

Meanwhile, Comparative Literature, too, with its share of skeptic criticisms, had grown into a methodized field of knowledge; it has also undergone multiple but gradual changes in structures as a field of knowledge: the 'connection' that Mathew Arnold spoke of, in his Inaugural Lecture at Oxford in 1857 (quoted in *Comparative Literature: A Critical Introduction*) as universal was still Euro-centric in application; constricted definitions of comparative literature bears the evidences of the 'white' solipsism even in the twentieth century when Paul Van Tiegham (1931) spoke of the discipline as "the mutual relations between Greek and Latin literature" (57) or even Rene Wellek (1970) could define the historicity of Comparative Literature in terms of "the influence of Walter Scott in France and the rise of the historical novel" (17). A shift in comparative models occurred, as in the translational literary phenomenon; post-structuralism had dismantled any form of semantic-cultural superiority: the post-colonial modalities of understanding also began to invade literary criticisms; hence, Comparative Literature that developed outside the Europe and United States began to derive from its indigenous cultures and hence, look beyond its national boundaries, rather than to begin with European models of literary understanding and then look within: Suasan Basnett quotes the founding objective of Indian Comparative Literature Association in 1981 as to "arrive at a conception of Indian literature which will not only modernize our literature departments but also take care of the task of discovering the greatness of our literature and to present a panoramic view of Indian literary activities through the ages" (39).

Thereafter, comparatists tried to maintain a balance between propagating literary understanding and cultural superiority so that the new agenda was to compare texts with new readings across cultures "the mutual illumination of several texts, or series of texts, considered side by side; the greater understanding we derive from juxtaposing a number of (frequently very different) works, authors and literary traditions" (Prawer 102). Another rather ironic situation was the growth of comparative literature as an academic discipline through the nineteenth century with a parallel shift towards monolingualism in Europe and the rest of the English speaking worlds which denigrated the traditional binary model of literary comparativism which required proficiency of multiple languages and the reading of original texts:

Whereas a Browning or a Pushkin had read works in various languages without thinking twice about it, a century later the ability to read in several languages was beginning to be

considered as a sign of exceptional intelligence and education. Where once knowledge of Greek and Latin was fundamental for any educated European, so by the 1920s the pattern changes radically and by 1990s the knowledge of Greek and Latin is limited to a small specialist group. Moreover the status of modern European languages in the nineteenth century is completely altered today. French, once regarded as probably the most European language, widely used across Central and Eastern Europe and throughout Africa and the Middle East, has fallen into second place behind English, the new world language of commerce ... this spread of English, combined with decline of classical languages has also had an impact on comparative literary studies." (Basnett 42)

Subsequently, the methodologies that developed in comparative literature could no longer insist on linguistic difference as a condition for comparing literatures. Translation, thus, became an important tool in the very act of comparison. In fact, Basnett does not mention the growing popularity of literatures that have often been considered 'non-canonical' – Indian, African-American, Latin-American etc. Vernacular modernisms or Multicultural feminisms are studies based on texts that often read in translation as well as in comparison.

Hence, it is necessary to look into the theoretical paradigms of each of these disciplines and then, look into the ways in which the translation studies, as the second to gain academic legitimacy can benefit its predecessor.

The Extent of Comparative Literary Theories

Now, comparative literary theories are not coherent knowledge bodies available prior to the practice of Comparative Literature: comparative studies with reference to literature may be said to have initiated in 1598 with Francis Meres' "A Comparative Discourse of Our English Poets with the Greek, Latin and Italian Poets"; as early as 1753, Bishop Robert Lowth attempted at theorizing modes of comparative studies while propounding on the additive values of juxtaposing the cultural-intellectual framework of the British-English and Hebrew writings:

We must see all things with their eyes [i.e. ancient Hebrews]: estimate all things by their opinion; ... We must act ... with regard to that branch of ... science which is called comparative ... in order to form a perfect idea of the general system and its different part, conceive themselves as passing through, and surveying, the whole universe, migrating from one planet to another and becoming for a short time inhabitants of each. (113-4)

Almost, three centuries later when comparative literature had already become a discipline, comparatists still actualized theories based on the similar values for understanding literatures, presumably divided: juxtaposition of different cultural contexts through literature with a view to cognitive advancement and the entire praxis governed by a holistic sense, to create a rather comprehensive body of knowledge about the concerned literatures.

The chiefly binary model of comparative literary theory has been functional for a prolonged period and is yet to be made obsolete, though the hegemonic nuances have declined in the formulation of theories: for instance, national boundaries gained importance for theorists after the 1940s: "Comparative Literature ... will make high demands on the linguistic proficiencies of our scholars. It asks for a widening of perspectives, a suppression of local and provincial sentiments, not easy to achieve." (Wellek 44)

Therefore, comparative literary theories developed based on the notion of discerning intertextual and intercultural mutuality by juxtaposing texts, originating from various cultures. There, hence, can be discerned three schools of theorists:

- a) The French school of theory derived from a positivistic approach with a great emphasis on historicizing literature as is expounded in the seminal texts *La Littérature comparée* named by Paul Van Tieghem (1931) and by Claude Pichois and Andre M. Rosseau (1967) ; nationalistic notions were supreme and with most theorists assuming the greatness of French literature as : “[the] backbone of the universal literary system, and the task of comparatist consisted in examining how and why the English, German, Spanish, Italian and Russian ribs were attached to it.” (Joist 25)
- b) The American school is characterized by a multiplicity of theories, given the academic freedom and the complete aversion to the nationalistic instinct, given the immigrant background of the nation; therefore, the chief tenets of the theorists like Rene Wellek, Harry Levin in his *Grounds for Comparison* are cultural tolerance and eclectic approach to comparative studies where it is, as Wellek said, “possibly, it would be best to speak simply about literature”.
- c) The likes of Shklovsky, Zhirmunsky or Jacobson propounded theory based on social realism as was the Russian order of the day; but tried striking a balance with aesthetic aspects of culture. Inter-literariness (synchronic and diachronic, typological contacts and analogies) was the primary component of the theoretical writings but it also derived from historicism vis-à-vis, the cultural situations and the institutional conditions creating frameworks literary pieces.

It should be however, remembered that these theories developed based on certain attitudes of academically viable comparatists and are neither infallible nor exclusive in application. Rather, it is possible in a comparative study to refer to these as valid modes of understanding, rather than approaching comparisons exclusively through one of these theories. Moreover, most of these theorists have been criticized for being Euro-centric; with the advent of postcolonial studies and proliferation of minoritarian discourses, such theoretical dictums have been modified to suit comparative literatures as practiced in Latin-America, Japan and India. Comparative theory of literature has reached an age of dialogics, dialectics and globalectics that brings under considerations, the machinations of economic and political forces creating sociocultural spaces that are glocal (characterized by both global and local values). Therefore, comparative literary theories are in a state of flux with certain constant and rather irreplaceable denominations.

- a) Cross-cultural studies (often the traditional binary model); b) Historicity; c) Temporal dimensions (synchronic, diachronic); d) Spatial dimensions (inclusive of the Non-Geographic); e) Linguistic dimensions; f) Literary tools (themes, motifs, genres)

The attempt here is to extend the boundaries of comparative literary theory without being incongruous with the extant but remaining open to the possibilities of the new theoretical extent through tenets of translation studies.

The Extent of Theories in Translation Studies

Like Comparative Literature, the practice of translation precedes the advent of Translation Studies, though acts of translation precedes acts of literary comparison. Translated texts date back to 2100 B.C., and then, Etienne Dolet of France (1509-46), was said to have propounded one of the first translation theories that instructed the translator to be completely faithful to the original in understanding as well as in rendering. In fact, until the last century, all theoretical frameworks developed under source-oriented approaches were concerned with what a translator must or must not do. The principle focus was on the closeness to the source text as regards both meaning and form. It acquired religious validity through the Evangelical tradition with Biblical translation. Later, the likes of

George Chapman, who famously translated Homer, or Alexander Pope with his translation of *Illiad* was faithful to this source-oriented principles. Even, a century later, *The Principles of Translation*, the first systematic work on translation studies by Alexander Frazer Tytler referred to translation as a complete transcript of the original, even in style and manner of writing. Mathew Arnold in his lectures published as "On Translating Homer" in 1861 upholds the superiority of the source text and writes a translation of Homer's *Illiad* from Greek to English should be judged based on whether the translated text has the same effect as the 'original' text.

However, Saussure's 1916 publication of *Cours in General Linguistics*, there was rethinking about the "original" essence of a language and the changeable relationships of syntactic patterns with semanticity. These linguistic norms were developed by Roman Jakobson in his "On the Linguistic Aspects of Translation" where he introduced inter-lingual, intra-lingual and inter-semiotic principles of translation: besides translation theory was regarded as a part of linguistic communication based on Information Theory, source-oriented, normative, synchronic and focused on the faithfulness of process as in the previous period. Then, the likes of Eugene Nida (who drew from Chomsky's idea of the surface and deep structures of the language) came to conceive of translation studies as an empirical study, constituting in a target-oriented approach. James Holmes propounded several theoretical principles under the two broad categories of pure translation studies and applied translation studies. The current tenets of translation studies derive mostly from the former, and is more relevant to any literary research and hence, to comparative literary theory. Pure Translation Studies is classified into Descriptive Translation Studies and Theoretical Translation Studies. The aim of Descriptive Translation Studies is concerned with the process that underlies the creation of the final product of translation. The objective of the Theory of Translation Studies, deriving from the empirical conditions of the former, tries to establish general principles by means of which these phenomena can be explained: these explanations can be formulated as theories a few of which are medium restricted (theories of written versus oral translation), area-restricted (theories relating to specific language communities), rank-restricted (theories dealing with language as a rank or level system), text-type restricted (theories relating to particular text categories such as poems, technical manuals, etc.), time restricted (theories dealing with contemporary texts or those from an older period), and problem restricted (for example theories concerning the translation of puns, titles, idioms, proper names, metaphors, etc).

Finally all these theoretical elements were brought together in the 1970s when Itmar Even-Zohar produced a synthesis of "structuralism," "Russian formalism," the "Communication theory," and semiotics to create the "Polysystem theory", of literature and culture. Polysystem Theory, which deals with all cultural, linguistic, literary, and social phenomena, does not consider translations as single texts, but regards them as a system functioning within a polysystem governed by the literary system in which translations are done: "The polysystem is conceived as a heterogeneous, hierarchized conglomerate (or system) of systems which interact to bring about an ongoing dynamic process of evolution within the polysystem as a whole. [The hierarchy] is the means by which translations were chosen, and the way they functioned within the literary system" (Even-Zohar 162).

Subsequently, Giden Toury construed the target-oriented theory from Zohar's polysystem as a complete subversion to the normative, synchronic, and Source-System Oriented theoretical frameworks, arguing that "the object - level of translation studies consists of actual facts of 'real life' - whether they be actual texts, inter-textual relationships, or models and norms of behavior - rather than the merely speculative outcome of

preconceived theoretical hypotheses and models, it is undoubtedly, in essence, an empirical science" (16). The central argument governing this theory was that a translation is a translation in the target culture, not the source culture. The studies should be more diachronic than synchronic. It also derives from the poststructuralist context of dissemination of knowledge. There is a shift in the balance of power from phonocentrism (sound and speech) to graphocentrism (writing); the so called "metaphysics" of the original as compared to the degradation of the 'other' holds no sanctity. Therefore, the translated text, till now considered only of derived, secondary importance, acquires a position of its own. And so the position and function of a translated text, is determined by considerations initiating in the culture which hosts them. Toury also felt that centralizing the role of the target text enabled a combination of the applied, pure and descriptive translation studies that makes any hypothesis, explicable and also verifiable. This also leads to the widening of stable research methodologies: product-oriented based on individual translations, process-oriented based on the thought processes that take place in the mind of the translator while she or he is translating and function-oriented deriving from the function or impact that a translation or a collection of translations has had in the socio-cultural situation of the target language.

Gradually, language as a concept, was no longer associated with a monolithic geographical space but multiple power structures: for instance, the language of the colonized as opposed to colonizers, or the language of the female as against phallogocentrism. Thus, the concept of inter-literary reception was derived from to explain the effects of one culture coming into contact with another are validated by translation. The likes of Andre Lefevre have proclaimed translation as 'rewriting': "[T]ranslation is a channel opened often without a certain reluctance, through which foreign influences can penetrate the native culture, challenge it and even contribute to subverting it" (2). The theories of polemical translations, free translations and carnival translations have come into being, widening not only the practical application of the translator praxis but also its theoretical repertoire. Hence, though the likes of Susan Bassnett, reportedly went back on their words about translation studies as one of the saviors of comparative literature, the scope of refurbishing comparative literary theory through translation studies is a viable option. My aim here is to apply the resources of the latter to explore *new* territories (and not invalidate older ones) without affecting any heirarchization with the fields of knowledge.

Rethinking Comparative Literary Theory through Concepts from Translation Studies

Dissociating linguistic identities from strict cultural specifications:

National cultures, as of now, consist of linguistic identities; languages, therefore have a validity of the national culture. Hence literary works produced through these languages will always have nationally sanctioned cultural validities. Comparative theories of literature have followed, hence, a dual policy of subsuming boundaries yet being very conscious about the existence of these boundaries. Even when a comparatist uses translated texts, a binary model (or multi-pronged model) of study is generally based on the cultural specifications of the source-text. For instance, the comparisons between Pushkin and Byron by Zhirmunsky contributing to the theory of typological analogies and inter-literariness or the study of inter-semiotic translations of Shakespeare through the application of the same theoretical principles derives from the linguistic vis-à-vis the cultural vis-à-vis the national boundaries of such creations. However, the target-oriented polysystem theory in translation studies shifts the emphasis on to the "translated" text

which leads to a state of flux in the linguistic identity of the text; thus, the semanticity of the target language is used to express a different set of cultural values, and in the process of internalizing it:

[The] linguistic systems between which translations move are designated as 'natural' or 'national' languages. However, these terms are anything but precise or satisfactory The imprecision of these terms is in direct proportion to the the linguistic diversity they seek to subsume. ... The difficulty of finding a generic term that would accurately designate the class to which individual languages belong is indicative of the larger problem of determining the principles that give those languages their relative unity or coherence – assuming, that is, that such principles really exist. (Weber 66)

In such a situation no language can solely belong to certain cultural specifications, validated by national boundaries. And therefore, one language can be differentiated from another not merely through the basis of its spatial associations but through under parameters like gender, age-group, social strata etc. The vestiges of this notion are available in the Derridian notion of translation and can be extended to the non-nationalism of translation:

Derrida's aporia of deconstructs the nationalist nominalism of language games by locating an always prior other within mono-lingual diction. The aporia loosens the national anchor from the language name of a nation and the name of a language. ... The contingency of the subject suggests here that French speakers who are French nationals constitute one possible world of French speakers among many. Once the national predicate is dislodged, no speaker maintains exclusive ownership of language properties. . ." (Apter, 247)

Comparative literary theory, through the utilization of the above principle, can look beyond the solipsistic cultural connotations of a linguistic identity. This will broaden horizons towards comparative studies of texts in a critical paradigm that is more concerned with the personal rather than the cultural dimensions of the text: for instance, a comparison of George Eliot and Sharatchandra Chattopadhyay's texts will derive from socio-cultural connotations placed in a given Victorian and post-independent social milieu that dominates the technique and the purpose of their usage of language as cultural identity; this will, make inevitable the comparisons of the colonized and the colonizer's socio-cultural circumstances by virtue of their linguistic identities. But through this new theoretical formation, the variant gender of the two authors and their gendered aesthetics may gain in emphasis, and the differences in treating a theme dissociated from its contemporary social value may become viable.

This can be perhaps better understood in certain culturally enunciated situations where national boundaries are not applicable; for example, comparative theories applied to literatures in tribal language will always emphasize on the 'tribal' capacity of the language and its aesthetic values in relation to this tribal understanding. However, the translator praxis through the target –oriented approach will focus on the literary aesthetics and other concerns without the tribal context in mind. Therefore, comparisons between a poem in any of the languages of the Indian tribes or the Australian 'aboriginals' with a mainstream writer can be based on the stylistics of each language, the impact of the stylistics on the thematic, rather than approaching the stylistics as a part of the cultural validation. However, the attempt here is not to negate socio-political values of literary understanding but explore other avenues of comparison; or rather this new possibility can be theorized as a subversion of the accepted norms where the cultural connotations are not at the helm; rather, the hitherto 'consequences' of culture like poetics, thematics or even stylistics, to a certain extent are considered as the primary concerns.

The possibility of a reception-oriented comparative theory:

This theoretical possibility extends from the strictly critical paradigm of comparative literary theory and the chances of its modifications through the emphasis on the receptive functionality of polysystem theory of translation studies. In the context of translatory praxis, the reception-oriented approach takes into account the needs of the target culture-system and how the translator's independent agency fulfils the needs of the system:

[The] translator's *skopos* [is] a decisive factor in a translation project ... [T]he *skopos* is a complexly defined intention whose textual realization may diverge widely from the source text as to reach a 'set of addressees' in the target culture. The success of the translation depends on its coherence with the addressees's situation. Although the possible responses to a text cannot be entirely predicted, a typology of essential guidelines may guide the translator's labor and the historical study of translation." (Venuti, 229)

The above theoretical context bears affiliations with the readers-response criticism that derives hugely from the aesthetics of reception; thus, understanding of a text is liberated from the prescriptive formats; this was also enabled by the post-structuralist literary position that dismantled the particularity of meanings of a text or rather the approaches to the meanings of a text. In translation studies, comparisons between the source-text and the target-text lose the parameters of measuring accuracy and also the shift of cultural-ideological values. This leads to a cross-cultural interchange without any hierarchical strengthening of the source-culture; rather the target culture comes into academic focus; the translated texts are studied not through the changes initiated through translation but through the merit of the re-created aesthetic values of the text. The autonomous functionality of the translated texts opens new avenues of interpretation, which is otherwise hinges on the shift and its causative intermediaries. This leads to a comparison of translated texts without reference to the source-texts and the literary merit of the translator becomes the central concern. Similarly while comparing multiple translations, the source-text is merely a reference point and not a critical parameter.

Thus, comparativism vis-à-vis translated literature is greatly enriched by this stand point. However, when applied to the theoretical position of borrowing of motifs, themes or ideas or even matters of stylistic between authors, mostly in a diachronic (but also synchronic manner), the texts of the author who borrows assumes an independent functionality. A film inspired by a novel will assume its own artistic value and the comparison will be in equilibrium, rather than between the master and the borrower. It will also not look into the faithfulness of the inspired texts to the inspired ones but appreciate both bodies of aesthetic endeavors as originals deserving a similar critical understanding. For example, Christie's *The Mirror Cracked From Side To Side* (1962) inspired Rituporno Ghosh's *Shubho Mohorot* (2003), a National Award Winning Bengali film based on Miss Marple story. Ghosh borrows the revenge motive and the central characters but transforms the nineteenth century British situation with Victorian remnants to a twentieth century Kolkata with modern urban complexities in the personal space. The Bangla film problematizes the concept of inter-semiotic translation. Ghosh does not merely create a celluloid version of the crime thriller but was more interested in the human relationships that often go beyond the mundane into the dramatic. Thus, a comparative theoretical position will depend on the differentiated treatment of a similar story-line. However, an advancement in this theoretical position will be through the comparison of the stylistics say of story-telling where Ghosh's interpretation is not a response to Christie's whodunit but a being of its own: rather the wronged murderess can be taken as a motif to

which Christie and Ghosh based on the dominant narrative factors respond to rather than modification of the former by the latter. Hence, genealogical considerations are detached from the artistic image and comparative literary theory is based on the reception of the image rather than its origin and usage as was previously.

The detachment from the origin and reverting to the consequences as a mode of comparativism, hence, requires conscious theorizing as it has often been merely seen as a possibility. Re-writing, rather than borrowing comes into focus through reception theory; the phenomena is more complicated, with more researchable insights than presumed:

Rewriting ... is a very important strategy which guardians of a literature use to adapt what is 'foreign' (in time and/or genealogical location) to the norms of the receiving culture. As such, rewriting plays a highly important part in the development of literary systems. On another level, rewritings are evidence of reception, and can be analyzed as such. These would appear to be two perfectly good reasons to give the study of rewriting a more central status in both literary theory and comparative literature. (Lefevre 89)

So rewriting vis-à-vis reception theory is a mode of theorizing the subversive. Hence, that which was hitherto considered secondary, duplicate, derived or imitated gains in aesthetic validity. Therefore, the comparative theory, thus, formulated will create a balance of power and a text will not be considered a response to its chronological predecessor because of certain similarities. Rather, the challenge is in inverting the structures of comparison by approaching the hitherto original through what is considered derivative.

Comparative literature and its theoretical positions have long been concerned with complementary synthesis of horizontal general literature and vertical history of ideas. The use of reception theory envisages a different aesthetic avenue through which the physical reality of a literary text is conceived, as if in a state of flux, so that each comparative study has an internal logic that refers to material reality of the text but is not constructed in its entirety from it. For example, a comparison between *Jane Eyre* (1847) and *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) will be governed by the notion of the latter as a response to the former, especially in the matter of usage of the "mad woman in the attic" motif. This is not to say that Meyer's work has not been acknowledged for its literary merit but in relation to Brontë's work it is always construed as a response. Hence, the alternative is to see how *Jane Eyre*, too, is a possible Euro-centric response to *Wide Sargasso Sea* and how Rochester has not been vilified in the later work but rather white-washed in the former; or how feminist ideologies have not grown to be multi-cultural but rather was initially white-middle-class like Jane; Bertha Mason is not therefore, an interpretation as such but a creation. Thus, this theoretical position of Comparative literary theory is more flexible as in it seeks both universal through particular, and vice-versa. On the other hand, it also lends functionality to a triadic model of reciprocation that preserves historicized aestheticism, universalized artistic possibilities as also possibilities exploring through subverting existing norms.

Process-oriented comparativism or the motivations of a comparative study:

This arises from the process-oriented translation praxis theorized by James Holmes in his Descriptive Translation Studies and later extended by Zohar's Polysystem theory where it had important implications in understanding the hierarchy discerned in the heterogeneous literary structure. For example, instead of, merely focusing on the thought processes of the translator during the translational praxis, the focus hence shifts to the means by which translations were chosen, and the way they functioned within the liter-

ary system. Therefore, theorization of translation is very conscious about the cultural and political implications of the translational process.

"Translated literature fulfills the needs of a young literature to put its renewed tongue in use in as many literary genres as possible in order to make it functional as a literary language and useful for its emerging public. Since, when it is young and in the process of being established, a young literature cannot create major texts in all genres until its polysystem has crystallized, it greatly benefits from the experience of other literatures, and translated literature becomes, in a way, one of its most important systems." (Even-Zohar, 1981, 117)

Evidently then process-oriented translation praxis delves into the political connotations of translation. This can be applied to the praxis of comparativism which hitherto has generally been concerned with the end-product: the comparative study as a critical-aesthetic paradigm of exploring literary values without much reference to the socio-political implications of bringing together texts, the objective being: "the mutual illumination of several texts or series of texts, considered side by side; the greater understanding we derive from juxtaposing a number of (frequently very different) works, authors and literary traditions." (Prawer 102)

Comparative literary theories, has hitherto, not been conscious to the power structures implied in a comparative study between two writers deriving from their cultural specifics. There is a sense of globalization that subsumes all national boundaries, but only for the purpose of aesthetic merits of a text.

In many ways, the rush to globalize the literary canon in recent years may be viewed as the "comp – lit – ization" of national literatures throughout the humanities. Comparative literature was in principal global from its inception Comparative literature necessarily works toward a non-nationally defined disciplinary locus, ... especially in an extremely globalized economy... . (Apter 42)

However, as shown earlier these national boundaries, often geo-political mostly exist, often deliberately made invisible with the emphasis on literary sensibilities. This is, therefore, another possible theoretical position that is contrary to the one formulated in 3.1 and derives from the existence of national boundaries, rather than through its negation. Hence, through process-oriented comparative study, the hitherto non-recognized factors like the political motive behind a comparative study or the effects likewise, the power structures in juxtaposing two cultural structures or even a study solely focusing on such effects rather than the aesthetic values of a literary text can be ordained. So, for instance, the concerns of a comparative study between a modernist poet of a regional language in India heralding the ers of 'New Poetry' in the Post- Tagorean Era, say Bishnu Dey, and that of T.S. Eliot will inevitably be dominated by the ideas of debt incurred by the former from the poetics of the latter. Hence, the balance of power will always be tilted towards the European predecessors; any negation of the European modernism will be perceived as a form of subversion by the Non-European recipient, especially through the post-colonial positions in comparative literary theory. On the other hand, a tribal writer will be perceived through all the tribal social structures as opposed to a mainstream writer. Now, what process-oriented approach derived from translation studies does is makes the comparative study not only aware of the power structures as an influence over the aesthetic elements but makes this power structures itself an object of study.

So the theoretical formulations will reflect how a certain comparative study affects the academic position of a text, regional or marginalized through comparisons with a main-

stream literary piece. Again, the various modes of comparative study can be analyzed and theories formulated on not just the functionality of these methods but the effects it has on the academic validity of the texts especially in relation to each other. Thus this comparative literary theory deals with more with effects of a comparative study rather than its modes. Thus, a new space is created for the functionality of comparative studies that is more in sync with the recent nature of literary studies beyond pure aestheticism to aestheticism vis-à-vis power structures to power structures vis-à-vis aestheticism, implying a change in focus. Evidently, "the literature around us is now unmistakably planetary system. The question is not really what we should do – the question is how. What does it mean studying ... literature? How do we do it?" (Moretti 148). This does not however mean that the traditional elements of a literary work are discounted or devalued. Rather they are re-evaluated as the load-bearing units of the politicized trends within the academia. This, therefore, initiates a structural alternative in actualizing comparative literature where the socio-political subject is located not outside but inside the comparative study of literature.

Metaphorics of gender in Translation studies for a gender-based comparative literary theory:

With the onset of the twentieth century, translation theories have come deconstruct (and sometimes reconstruct) hegemonic systems especially in relation to linguistics, semantics and socio-cultural connotations of language. The growing number of Feminist translation scholars has hence structured a sexualized terminology of translation: Lori Chamberlain, Susan Basnett, Sherry Simon have repeatedly used metaphors of "infidelity" or alternative marriage contract while theorizing about translation (a detailed explanation is provided in the Introduction). The consequences of reading fidelity to an original/husband as a metaphor for translation led to reinterpretation of several models of translation theories through the binary model of gender. For example Lori Chamberlain offers a re-reading of the hermeneuticist model of George Steiner, specifically as an exchange in a man-woman relationship. This creates a semantic/cultural situation where there is overt sexual politicization of 'language', which makes it a tool of gender expression: "Writing within the hierarchy of gender ... the [gender] paradigm becomes universal and the male and female roles ... are essential rather than accidental" (Chamberlain 313). So, the tenets of translation studies are conscious to the differences between the male and the female language or rather the usage of language: a number of translation theorists have based their studies of language on inferences drawn from differentiating genders. Moreover, the metaphorics of translation as mentioned earlier reveals a tension between an anxiety about the myths of paternity (or authorship and authority) and a profound dichotomy in the role of maternity (as the secondary or the reproduced). Thus, translation theorists reveal a remarkable consciousness about the binary constructions of gender, with language as the means of articulation and exemplification. On the other hand, the praxis of translator also distinguish between usages of language with reference to gender. Thus, George Steiner (1975), for example, vindicates a difference in choice of phrases: "[W]omen's speech is richer than men's in those shadings of desire and futurity known in Greek and Sanskrit as optative; women seem to verbalize a wider range of qualified resolve and masked promise. ... Certain linguistic differences do point towards a physiological basis or, to be exact, towards the intermediary zone between the biological and the social." (41-43) This differentiation between the male and the female language is not primarily in anti-thesis to the feminist studies but rather develops in a different direction. Now, comparative literature though influenced to an extent by Feminist

discourses, is not really conscious to the binary model of comparing the gender values of writing. Thematic comparative studies have explored representations of women or works of women writers in relation to cultural and temporal dimensions. Susan Basnett, in "Gender and Thematics" has expounded on the contributions of feminist literary theory in comparative literature but theoretical perspectives hardly ensure the comparison between gendered expressions. From the tenets of translation studies, hence, comparatists can devise means of juxtaposing literary works as gendered expressions beyond a feminist standpoint. Therefore, comparativism can be devise a means of interrogating the masculinity as a construct as much as femininity through comparative analysis of literary pieces with reference to the gender of the writers. This may not be limited to a non-hetero-normative framework and extend to 'queer' writings as well.

Evidently, the, this theoretical development is heavily dependent on the gendered usage of language as validated by translation theorists: but the exploration of the linguistic usage can also be extended to the analysis of a differentiated treatment of a same situation or similar emotions or social concern by two different authors. This is different from other comparisons based on gender because it does not derive from gender as a socio-culturally produced matter but rather from the linguistic productions of gender/sex itself. This theoretical perspective investigates language as a biologically-sociologically constructed choice: this helps in the reflections on the implication behind the usage of synonyms that still retain elements of differentiation. For example the usage of the words "puberty" and "adolescence" to denote the beginning of teenage vindicates different authorial intentions. While comparative literary theory has other modes of studying the above observation, it is not specifically compared through the gender of the author; or rather linguistic behavior is never solely explored through the medium of gender/ sex not through the exclusion of socio-cultural contexts but through exploring those areas specifically in relation to biological identity of the body. This will enable comparative studies of texts that require detailed reading not only for narratological or thematic concerns but also the semantic aspects and the space between similar semantic entities. Moreover, gender/sex is to an extent dissociated from socio-cultural or political concerns, this creates a space of negotiation through which comparative literary theory creates a critical paradigm that provides a representational space for both male and female, without being in contradiction to each other. Also, it provides newer avenues of looking at gender as a means of production whereas the existing critical paradigm is primarily concerned with gender as a produced space.

Conclusion: The Relationship: Future

In the given academic scenario, where both the disciplines need to explore newer avenues of knowledge as a means of sustenance, an inversion of the academic relationship such as this, is an attempt to contribute towards that very direction. Comparative Literary theories, while in application, has become a rather heterogeneous episteme leading to the convergence of several modalities of knowledge like area studies, gender studies, modes of reading cultures etc. The relationship with Translation studies, certain aspects of which has been explored in this paper, is a mutually enriching one. The battles between mono-ligualism and multi-ligualism are slowly becoming outdated: as Apter argues the challenge of comparative literature in the contemporary world is to find a way to reconcile untranslatable alterity with the need to translate nevertheless, rejecting both the false pieties of not wanting to mistranslate the other, which result in monolingualism,

and the opposite globalism that “translates everything without ever traveling anywhere” (Apter 91). Instead the theoretical developments of both the disciplines acquire more potential when the methodologies of one are often applicable to the other. This will also create the possibility of a more balanced relationship between the two disciplines. Instead of a power struggle, the equilibrium between two disciplines can counter hegemonic formations of cultural politics that impede the study of connections between language and literature.

Gokhale Memorial Girls' College, Kolkata, India

Works Cited

- Apter Emily. *The Translation Zone: A New Comparative Literature*. Princeton. Princeton University Press. 2006. Print.
- Bassnett, Susan. *Comparative Literature: A Critical Introduction*. U.S.A. Blackwell Publishing. 1993.
- Chamberlain Lori. “Gender and the Metaphorics of Translation”. *Translation Studies Reader*. 2nd edition. (ed. By Lawrence Venuti). 2004. 306-322. Print.
- Corngold, Stanley (2005), “Comparative Literature: The Delay in Translation”, in Sandra Berman and Michael Wood (eds.) *Nation, Language, and the Ethics of Translation*, Princeton and Oxford, Princeton University Press, (2005), pp. 139-145. Print.
- Derrida Jacques and Venuti Lawrence Source: *Critical Inquiry*, 27(2) The University of Chicago Press (Winter, 2001) pp. 174-200. Print.
- Evan-Zohar Itamar, “Translation Theory Today”, *Poetics Today*, 2(4). 1981. (5) Print.
- Even-Zohar, “The Position of Translated Literature Within the Literary Polysystem”. *Translation Studies Reader*. (ed. By Lawrence Venuti) 1978. Print.
- Prawer Siegbert. *Comparative literary Studies: An Introduction*. London. Duckworth, 1973 Print.
- Johnson Barbara. “The Surprise of Otherness: A Note on the Wartime Writings of Paul de Man”. *Literary Theory Today*. (ed. Peter Collier and Helga Geyer-Ryan) London. Polity Press. 1990. (13-23). Print.
- Joist Francois. *Introduction to Comparative Literature*. U.S.A. Bobs-Merrill Company. 1974.
- Lefevere Andre. *Translation/History/Culture: A Source Book*. London. Routledge. 1992. Print.
- Nida Eugen, *Toward a Science of Translating*. Boston. Brill Archive 1964.
- Toury Gideon, *In Search of a Theory of Translation*, Tel Aviv. The Porter Institute of Semiotics and Poetics. Tel Aviv University. 1980 Print.
- Moretti Franco “Conjectures on World Literature”. *Debating World Literature*. (edited by Christopher Prendergast, Benedict Richard O’Gorman Anderson) New York. Verso Publishing. 2004. Print.
- Steiner, George. *After Babel*. London. Oxford University Press. 1975. Print.
- Weber Samuel. “A Touch of Translation: On Walter Benjamin’s ‘Task of Translator’” in *The Ethics of Translation*. (ed. By Sandra Bermann, and Michael Wood) United Kingdom. Princeton University Press. 2005 (65-78) Print.
- Wellek Rene. “The Name and Nature of Comparative Literature” *Discriminations*. London. Yale University Press. 1970. (1-36) Print.
- . “The Crisis of Comparative Literature.” in *Concepts of Criticism*. New Haven. Yale University Press. 1963. (282-296) Print.

In Search of Humanity: A Bakhtinian Dialogic Study of *The Sound and the Fury*

YUE WANG

Abstract

William Faulkner, as one most creative and influential American writers in the 20th century, has ever attracted scholars' concerns. First published in 1929, *The Sound and the Fury* is recognized as one of the most successful experimental American novels of its time. The discussion on it has involved many issues such as race, time, gender, etc. Mikhail Bakhtin proposes dialogic theory in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, which suggests the characters should have their perspective which can parallel with the author's voice. And the un-finalizability of dialogue involves constant responses that will continue endlessly. This study will explore the humanity of moral and evil displayed in different characters in the text through the Bakhtinian dialogue theory.

Keywords: *The Sound and the Fury*; humanity; dialogue; moral; evil; un-finalizability

Introduction

In *The Sound and the Fury* (1929), Faulkner successfully uses the multi-voiced narration, with four different perspectives telling the same story which forms a dialogic discourse. And its general feeling of time, loss, decay, and death are all present in *The Sound and the Fury* where that nihilism properly displays the people's dilemma under the dissolved Old South¹ social system. The first three sections consist of the different voices and memories of the Compson children who are Benjy, a 33 years old idiot, speaking on April 7th, 1928, Quentin, a young Harvard student, speaking on June 6th, 1910, and Jason, a store worker, speaking again on April 6th, 1928. Faulkner tells the fourth section April 8th, 1928 in an omniscient voice, but focuses on Dilsey, the Compson family's "Negro" servant who has devoted a lot in caring for the children. In this family, the parents Mr. Compson as an alcoholic, Mrs. Compson as a hypochondriac mother, both are irresponsible for their children. Quentin, as the older brother, is a sensitive man, whose philosophical thinking is exhibited deeply, Caddy is a rebellious and brave girl with kindness, Jason is a mean guy who is cold and cruel to everyone, Benjy as an "idiot" does not understand any feeling of time, always living at present, only depends on his sense to feel his surroundings.

About the studies of the novel, scholars paid more attention to Faulkner's modernism, like Andre Bleikasten's *The Ink of Melancholy: Faulkner's Novels from the Sound and the Fury to Light in August* (1990). Particularly, on *The Sound and the Fury*, his analysis of Quentin's suicide and the three brothers' desire for Caddy inspired readers to think deeply. With the appearance of de-structuralism, his works are deconstructed and viewed as lacking definite meanings. As Guan Jianming observed, "their interrogation of Faulkner's status

of independence and transcendence has not only ushered in a much broader view in Faulkner's studies but also furthered our understanding of his works" (Guan 7). Concord Ailen in "William Faulkner: The Novel as Form" explained the influence of the complex sentences and called readers to feel the implications and the author's creating process. Noel Polk's article "Trying Not to Say: A Primer on the Language of *The Sound and the Fury*" analyzed the author's inclination of hiding himself from the perspectives of word, punctuation, and syntax.

Likewise, In China, Faulkner's study has also achieved a great achievement. *The Critical Reviews on Faulkner*, edited by Li Wenjun collected the essays on Faulkner's life, art, and literary creation. In the book *The Study on William Faulkner*, Xiao Minghan analyzed deeply the relationship between Faulkner's creating and American southern society, the southern Christianity culture, and western modernism school. On *The Sound and the Fury*, his discussion on Quentin's section, especially the imagined dialogue between Quentin and his father has great enlightenment on this paper. In *Faulkner's Textualization of Subalternities*, Liu Jianhua through the question of woman's promiscuity displayed the class system of southern society. In *Faulkner's Text in Postmodern Context*, Guan Jianming explores the suspicion of the characters on the eternal pursuit and spiritual values against the backdrop of postmodern time. The essay "On the Dialogue between Tradition and Modern Time: The Study of William Faulkner's Creating Art" by Wang Zuyou comments the book from its dialogue and balance. Especially, the part of the dialogue which has enlightened this paper to have further research on the function of this dialogue in Faulkner's revealing the humanity in *The Sound and the Fury*.

Humanity has ever been discussed by philosophers. Views in the first kind see human beings as inherently good, as John Locke argues that people are born equal, and are willing to treat each other as they would like to be treated. This "will" is known as sympathy, the source of justice, and kindness. The Chinese philosopher, Mencius, holds a similar point, declaring that humans are naturally moral but are corrupted by the social environment. The second kind sees human beings as inherently bad. According to *the Bible*, there is the original sin; human beings are spotted by the sin of Adam and Eve. Xuncius, another follower of Confucius, asserted that human nature is evil. Others stand a neutral point and they believe that human beings' behavior is determined by both biological and social factors, and there is no clear boundary between "moral" and "evil". And this paper will not stay at the debate of humanity as above said, while, it will discuss the different humanity and its complexity according to the characters in this novel.

The Russian thinker Bakhtin's dialogue theory enables us to see a dialogic discourse, which is a form of resistance to the thinking that favors a single and absolute truth. In *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, Bakhtin considers that for the author "the hero is not 'he' and not 'I' but a fully valid 'thou,' that is, another and other autonomous 'I'. The hero is the subject of a deeply serious, real dialogic mode of address, not the subject of a rhetorically performed or conventionally literary one." (Bakhtin 63). In this novel, the four different sections tell the same story which forms the great dialogue in structure, "And this dialogue- the great dialogue of the novel as a whole—takes place not in the past, but right now, that is, in the real presence of the creative process" (Bakhtin 63). "Dialogue has penetrated inside every word, provoking in it a battle and the interruption of one voice by another. This is micro-dialogue [...] the author retains for himself no essential "surplus" of meaning and enters on an equal footing with heroes into the great dialogue of the novel as a whole" (75). The dialogic strategy makes a text as a polyphonic novel

which creates not voiceless slaves, but free people, getting an equal position with their author and argues with him. Therefore, all the narrative forms, such as the heteroglossia² or the double voice according to Bakhtin both are the dialogic forms in art. And the characters are “not treated as the object of the author’s finalizing artistic vision” (Bakhtin *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics* 5). In another word, because of the unfinalizability³ of dialogue, the novel is open to readers and always calls for readers’ different responses to it. Likewise, Benjy, Quentin, Jason, and the author all give their responses about the Compsons’ decline in this novel. This study through analyzing humanity in the novel from Bakhtinian dialogic theory tries to reveal the complexity of humanity and the art of dialogic narrative in this novel.

1. The “Morals” of Humanity

Humanity is complicated; it is hard to simply define a person as moral or evil. We only can review him or her from the main trend of his or her characteristics. The morals of humanity are displayed as kindness, honesty, loyalty, innocence, sensitivity, and kind-heartedness as such. In this novel, the morals of humanity are mainly represented by Benjy, Quentin, Caddy, and Dilsey.

1.1. Benjy’s Innocence: An Idiot’s Narration

Benjy, a 33 years old idiot, as one of voice, told the story which was full of confusion. Faulkner’s choosing an idiot to tell a story just responded to the title and the theme of the novel. In an interview, Faulkner said that:

“the only emotion I can have for Benjy is grief and pity for all mankind. You can’t feel anything for Benjy because he doesn’t feel anything. The only thing I can feel about him is a concern as to whether he is believable as I created him. [...] Benjy is incapable of good and evil because he had no knowledge of good and evil” (*The Paris Review Foundation*, No.12).

In Benjy’s world, there were no past and present and no evil and good as Faulkner said. Although he was not rational enough, yet he could feel tenderness and love through bellowing or crying expressing his feelings. Caddy as the sister is Benjy’s dependence. Thus, it was the threat to tenderness and love that caused him to bellow when he felt the change in Caddy that she lost the smell of trees which was instead of perfume. Because she had grown up and fell in love and Benjy felt he no longer had Caddy his own; being an idiot, he was not even aware that Caddy was gone. In the opening lines of the story, Benjy’s pasture was lost to a golf course.

Through the fence, between the curling flower spaces, I could see them hitting. They were coming toward where the flag was and I went along the fence.

“Here, caddie.” He hit. They went away across the pasture. I held to the fence and watched them going away (*The Sound and the Fury*, 3).⁴

“Here, Caddie.”, but sister Caddy was not here. Faulkner made us understand an idiot’s perception and horror. Benjy’s mental capacity is that of a 3-year-old and cannot reason or explain. He experiences things through senses and reports them as such. Heard of “Caddie”, he thought of Caddy, for the same pronunciation of both words, which reminded him of his dear sister. When Benjy caught a girl because he considered her as Caddy after Caddy being disowned by his family, “I try to cry [...] I try to keep. [...] falling the hill” (*SF* 53). The repeat “try to say” (*SF* 53) tells us: this girl is Caddy for him

and the deep love of Caddy for him. The call to a caddie, we eventually learn, agitates Benjy, because his emotional life centers on love for his long-gone sister Caddy.

The most bewildering modernist disorder in time is the first narrative in *The Sound and the Fury*, which in seventy pages shifts back and forth over a hundred times among eight major moments between 1898 and 1928, sometimes in the middle of a sentence, as these moments between merge in Benjy's disordered mind. As Faulkner explained, "to that idiot, time was not a continuation, it was an instant, there was no yesterday and no tomorrow, it all is at this moment, it all is now to him. He cannot distinguish between what was last year and what will be tomorrow, he does not know whether he dreamed it, or saw it" (*The Paris Review Foundation* No.12). Faulkner indicated to the reader that this idiot had no sense of time. As Guan Jianming observes that "[in] the total span of the thirty years, the most important affairs included in his memory are [...] the care and love from Caddy and his sister's social intercourse and loss of virginity and marriage" (Guan 73). Benjy's monologue is uttered in 1928 when he is 33 years old but concerns chiefly the years 1898-1912. Benjy's mind makes endless memories of Caddy to miss up the loss of her. It ranges over the significant events of his life dictated by a logic of continuity of sound or sense only, registering everything except his own "white noise" of bellowing or whimpering. This "tale told by an idiot full of sound and fury signifying nothing" (Shakespeare Act V Scene5), signifies nothing to the idiot while the other family members must put up with the sound and the fury from Benjy. In this whole family, only Caddy loves Benjy and gives him warmth, Quentin's indifference, Jason's hatred along with Mrs. and Mr. Compson's coldness all displayed on this innocent boy. To some extent, Benjy can be regarded as a mirror of morality.

"A character's word about himself and his world is just as fully weighted as the author's word usually is; [...] It possesses extraordinary independence in the structure of the work; it sounds, as it were, alongside the author's word and in a special way combines both with it and with the full and equally valid voices of the other characters" (Bakhtin 7). Here, Faulkner tells the story of Compson family decline with an idiot's point of view, some fragments of his consciousness, and his real sense to the people and his surrounding world. Including Caddy's loss of virginity, Benjy's sleeping alone and Caddy's using perfume all disturbs Benjy's mind. And the only way to express his emotion is to bellow or cry. "The position from which a story is told, a portrayal built, or information provided must be oriented in a new way to this new world — a world of autonomous subjects, not objects" (Bakhtin 7-8). From this section, through Benjy's senses, the losses of childhood, time, love, and the property of the Compsons are displayed clearly and the readers can feel the innocence of Benjy and Caddy's deep warmth for him.

1.2. Quentin's Thoughtfulness: Quentin's Monologue

Unlike Benjy, Quentin is a normal man and is the most complex character in Compson family. As a Harvard student, he is intelligent enough to understand what the family has been in the past and too sensitive to cope with what it has become in the present.

When the shadow of the sash appeared on the curtains it was between seven and eight o'clock and then I was in time again, hearing the watch. It was Grandfather's and when Father gave it to me he said I give you the mausoleum of all hope and desire; ...I give it to you not that you may remember the time, but that you might forget it now and then for a moment and not spend all your breath trying to conquer it (SF 93-94).

Heavily influenced by his father, who has taught him that "all men are just accumulations dolls stuffed with sawdust swept up from trash heaps" (*SF* 175). Quentin's narrative shows his father's words mingling with his own. This dialogue does not happen between his father and him but happens to himself. For Quentin, Caddy's virginity is the most important honor; when Caddy lost her chastity, he suddenly felt that the family honor was stained and could not be rescued which finally led to Quentin's committing suicide. The concept of honor brings Quentin into an eternal struggle with time. In Quentin's mind, the sense of the Southern past is noble, courageous, and honest which is opposite the present deceit and dishonor. What's more, Quentin is often reminded of his weakness to defend his sister's honor according to notions of chivalry and family pride. Because of Caddy's deprivation, he emotionally breaks up which makes him lose his mental strength to continue living.

Unlike the idiot's helpless dependency on Caddy, the relationship between Quentin and Caddy is much more complicated. "Benjy's love for Caddy hardly strikes us as abnormal once we know that he is fated to perpetual childhood; Quentin's, on the other hand, develops into a morbid passion whose outcome can only be despair and death" (Bleikasten 71-72). Quentin lives in the past all the time, the honor, the nobility, the purity of the southern woman has rooted in his mind. "What the confusion thus achieved is meant to render is, of course, Quentin's emotional turmoil, but paradoxically it also testifies to his greater intelligence" (Bleikasten 71-72). Part of Quentin's reason for hating and fearing clocks and watches is that he is so hurt by the passage of time. He wants to stop time, and remain with Caddy in some eternal and changeless way: "Finished. If things just finished themselves. Nobody else there but her and me" (*SF* 79). But this is impossible. He can find only one final and changeless act, and that is suicide. Father to him is very important whose occupation is over Quentin's mind. Because he is unable to protect the honor of family which Caddy stands for. Time for him becomes a barrier which he wants to return to the past when Caddy was pure. And the terror of sexuality makes him fall into a fantasy that his committing incest with Caddy, returning the past time when they were a little boy and little girl. As Toming said that:

"More importantly, Quentin internally argues with father's nihilism. He speaks to his 'Father,' Mr. Compson as if he were the Father in Heaven. The irony is obvious since Mr. Compson, like the demi-god Silenus in Greek mythology, believes only in the nothingness in life. To argue against his Father and to be with Caddy forever, Quentin, based on the Christian belief in an afterlife, creates a story that his "wake" (death) as his "wedding" with Caddy. Thus, doubly ironically, his disagreement with his Father's nihilism leads him to the nihilism of Christianity" (Toming 352).

Because of no way to stop time, Quentin determined to die with Caddy together, trying to save her and the honor of the family. Quentin's imagination of committing incest with Caddy is a ritual redemption for the honor and his self. His section begins his listening to the ticking of his grandfather's watch that his father gave him so that he would not remember the time, but forget it. He desires to stop time even to return to the past days when his sister Caddy was pure. While all these desires cannot be realized, finally, he chooses to commit suicide to stop time.

I bathed and shaved. The water made my finger smart a little, so I painted it again. I put on my new suit and put my watch on and packed the other suit and the accessories and my razor and brushes in my handbag, and wrapped the trunk key into a sheet of paper and put it in an envelope and addressed it to Father, and wrote the two notes and sealed them. (*SF* 81)

Quentin determined to leave everything in good order. His death shall be no mess which is a kind of purity for him at least in his imagination.

Quentin's sensitivity makes him refuse to accept his sister's impurity. "Thus, he persuades himself and attempts to persuade Caddy that her 'infidelities' were not committed of her own free will but forced upon her" (Bleikasten 172-173). Even his mood reached a kind of crazy state:

do you love him
her hand came out I didn't move it fumbled down my arm and she held my hand flat
against her chest her heart thudding
No no
Did he make you then he made you do it let him he was stronger than you and he tomorrow I'll kill him I swear I will father needn't know until afterward and then you and me
nobody need ever know we can take my school money we can cancel my matriculation
Caddy you hate him don't you don't you
She moved my hand up against her throat her heart was hammering there (SF 150-151)

Here, the text without punctuation displays Quentin's agitated emotion for her sister's loss of virginity. As an artist-like person, Quentin constantly reflects himself and his surrounding world. Quentin looks at himself as it was in a mirror of another inner self which forms this monologue, a unique dialogue, like Bakhtin says "His consciousness of self-lives by its unfinalizability and its indeterminacy. The author constructs not a character, nor a type, nor a temperament he constructs no objectified image of the hero at all, but rather the hero's discourse about himself and his world" (Bakhtin 53). And from Quentin's point of view, the reader can know more about this family where is full of coldness and distress. And his thoughtfulness and sensitivity in humanity and his concern for family honor have been displayed clearly.

1.3. Caddy's Love and Courage: Zero Narration

When discovering her pregnancy, the parents quickly marry Caddy to a banker, Herbert Head who promises Caddy's brother Jason a job. However, after realizing Caddy's pregnancy with another man, Herbert immediately divorces her and rejects Jason's job offer. Thus, Jason always holds hatred to Caddy for the loss of the promised job for him which later, in the scene of meeting between Jason and Caddy, Caddy has lost her usual rebellion instead of much obeying to Jason, as Polk says that "The Caddy presented by Jason is unfamiliar. No longer the bold child or the brazen adolescent, ... Even the practical Caddy who 'has to marry someone' has ceased to exist when she stammers and pleads with Jason to let her see her daughter" (Polk 45). All these images of Caddy are displayed by others' voices. She leaves her "mark" through her brothers' memory, though she is reduced to silence in the structure of the novel. In the four sections, Caddy is always the center of each story-teller and from whom "we recognize her in Benjy's hammering bellow, in Quentin's deafening, misogynistic rant, and in the endorsement on the checks that her daughter may not view and that her mother destroys. Represented entirely through male memory, Caddy as a mother is given textual status primarily in Jason's account" (Polk 37).

What Caddy is seeking is recognized female identity and independence, social attention to female voice, and control over her own life. In doing all these, she liberates herself first from the traditional values on women's sex bondage. Caddy takes her step to gain female identity with more and more difficult and is finally submerged by adverse criti-

cism. But she is to some extent a winner: all the Compson brothers have no offspring, Caddy's daughter, Miss Quentin inherits her mother's fearlessness and keeps up Caddy's rebellion. Faulkner once said of Benjy that "the only thing that held him into any sort of reality, into the world at all, was the trust that he had for his sister, that he knew that she loved him and would defend him, and so she was the whole world to him, and these things were flashes that were reflected on her as in a mirror" (qtd. Gwynn and Blotner 63-4). But Benjy can react to different kinds of things, whether a movement, an object or a sound such as hearing the golfers shout "Caddie". When he found Caddy's fiancé, he just cried and pulled Caddy's dress.

"Hush, Benjy," Caddy said.

"Why, Benjy," Caddy said. "Aren't you going to let me stay here and talk to Charlie a while."

Charlie came and put his hands on Caddy and I cried more, I cried loud (SF 47).

We can see Benjy's reaction to Caddy when he saw her fiancé., Charlie. For Benjy, Caddy is pure and he is not willing to lose her purity by this man. Though his language is crying while it can express his feelings well and meanwhile makes Caddy understand. If people treat Benjy kindly, they are morally good, and so is the opposite. In this way, the passive character of Benjy becomes the most active moral guide for the reader's response to other characters.

Caddy is a source of warmth and vitality. Faulkner himself saw Caddy as "the beautiful one, she was my heart's darling." And she is associated with the masculine virtues of daring and strength which Quentin so admires in his sister. Further, caddy through Benjy's associations of love and tenderness with the flames in the fireplace and the reflection of light in the mirror. When she is about to leave the family as Herbert's wife, her major concern is still for the well-being of Quentin, Benjy, and their father. Caddy lived in a family that lacks parental love; however, she was full of love, especially for her little brother Benjy.

1.4. Dilsey's Loyalty: An Omniscient Narrator

In the loveless Compson family, the black servant Dilsey is kind and sympathy to others, becoming a spiritual pillar for the whole family. And she is the only one who understands the Compson family well and knows the reason leading to falling of it: "I've seed de first en de last" (SF 297). Her heart is filled with the innocent and honorable benevolence. Opposite to Jason's selfishness, cruelty, and coldness, she is, moreover, one of Faulkner's favorite characters, and was highly thought of by her creator. "Dilsey is one of my favorite characters because she is brave, courageous, generous, gentle, and honest" (*The Paris Review Foundation* No.12). On Benjy's birthday, she would manage to get a birthday cake for him from her pocket, when the Compson family has already been bankrupt. When the breadwinner and household master, Jason, taunts Quentin, she always stands up and offers the little girl maternal affection and protection.

Her way of treating people depends on her consciousness and principles. In the whole Compson family, Dilsey is the only one who has a clear and healthy mind. Whatever happens, she keeps calm, offers some quick solution, and moves forward. Even when Jason calls her an old half-dead nigger, she does not refute, complain, or cry as Mrs. Compson always does. She is wise enough to see through everything and she is tolerant enough to bear everything. Throughout the novel, Dilsey always offers maternal love to whoever needs it in the family. She is tender and loving towards Quentin, Caddy, and

Jason. The detailed attention which Faulkner pays to Dilsey's spiritual uplifting in the last section of the novel reminds us that despite all its anguish and pain, she still holds love and belief in life.

2. The "Evils" of Humanity

Meanwhile, in contrast with the morals of humanity, the evils of humanity are displayed as cruelty, revenge, selfishness, coldness, and indifference as such. Jason, Mr. Compson, and Mrs. Compson are the representatives in this novel.

2.1. Jason's Cruelty: Jason's Voice

The same as the first two sections telling the story of Caddy from the two brothers' point of view, the third section is from another brother's perspective to tell it. Thus, through such a dialogic discourse can each story find itself in intimate contact with someone else's story. As Bakhtin says that "the very construction of the novel, the author speaks not about a character, but with him. Only a dialogic and participatory orientation takes another person's discourse seriously and is capable of approaching it both as a semantic position and as another point of view" (Bakhtin 63-64). Because the first two sections are the stories told by the idiot, Benjy, and the over sensitive Quentin who both are not normal in spirit and Faulkner thought it is not clear enough, thus the third section arranged is Jason's story.

Jason has been one of Faulkner's nastiest characters, and he certainly reveals his conceit, hypocrisy, and lust for power. Caddy's marriage to Herbert is identified in Jason's mind with the fall of the family and his disinheritance, and young Quentin is a living reminder of her sin. "Once a bitch, always a bitch" (SF 180). He allows Caddy a glimpse of her daughter, burning the circus tickets before Luster's eyes — are balanced by the rarely glimpsed despair which afflicts Jason just as it did his brother Quentin:

"Whatever I do, it's your fault," she says. "if I'm bad, it's because I had to be. You made me. I wish I was dead. I wish we were all dead." Then a door slammed.
 "That's the first sensible thing she ever said," I say (SF 260).
 "Once a bitch always a bitch, for her..." (SF 206).

"Another voice is heard now, harsh, petulant, sardonic; a hysterically self-assertive speaking voice[...] He is in his petty provincial way an implacable man-hater, and in like fashion, too, he takes the role of the satirist, venting his rancor in floods of invective and sarcasm and exposing human folly with merciless eloquence" (Bleikasten 105-106). To Faulkner, Jason represented, in his own words, "complete evil," he added: "He's the most vicious character, in my opinion, I ever thought of" (*The Paris Review Foundation* No.12). Jason, however, is a very disturbing and cruel villain. He cheats and steals from his own family, and, driven by a bitter spirit of revenge, he is without a single shred of decent feeling. He uses cold and calculating logic as an excuse for his heartless behavior. All these crazy things he did just show his cruelty to his families. When Caddy wants to see her daughter, she begged him with money:

"I'll give you a hundred," she says. "Will you?"
 "Just a minute," I say. "And just like I say. I wouldn't have her know it for a thousand dollars."
 "Yes," she says. "Just like you say do it. Just so I see her a minute. I won't beg or do anything. I'll go right on away."
 "Give me the money," I say.

[...]

I could see her running after us through the back window (SF 203-205).

He only loves himself and concerns his benefit, thus, he is indifferent to others unless there something involving money. In Jason's monologue, what Jason feels for Caddy is hatred for his loss of the job in a bank resulted from Caddy's misconduct. The child she had to leave him as a hostage has therefore become "the symbol of the lost job itself" (SF 355) and it is on his niece that he will take out his hatred.

Jason devises an ingenious scheme to steal the money Caddy sends to support her daughter Miss Quentin's upbringing, indeed, "For Jason, Miss Quentin is simply a commodity in the system that he controls: "I never promise a woman anything nor let her know what I'm going to give her. That's the only way to manage them" (SF 193). He extorts money from his gullible mother; ... he sells Caddy the right to glimpse her daughter for one hundred dollars; and he torments little Quentin, withholding money and letters from her mother" (Polk 47). Thus, without a mother's love and living in a cold family, Miss Quentin grows up unhappily in the atmosphere of coldness and cruelty which his unpleasant character creates.

When little Quentin steals his money, which should have belonged to her, Jason becomes crazy and running for her. On the way to chasing her, he met a sheriff:

"What do you aim to do with that girl, if you catch them?"

"Nothing," Jason said. "Not anything." I wouldn't lay my hand on her. The bitch that cost me a job, the one chance I ever had to get ahead, that killed my father and is shortening my mother's life every day and made my name a laughing stock in the town. I won't do anything to her," he said. "Not anything" (SF 304)

As Bleikasten says that Jason senses "treachery and thievery everywhere, suspects everyone and regards the whole world as his personal enemy" (Bleikasten 110). Even to his own families, he has only the coldness and orders for them. He con-tempted Dilsey and lowered her as a fool, when he asked the key from her, he cried that "Give me the key, you old fool!" (SF 281) When looking for little Quentin, he asked a man whether his niece was there, he felt the man was lying, "He said they were not here. I thought he was lying" (SF 312). For Jason, there is no trust and belief between each other and his mind is full of hatred and suspects to the world which he uses his cruelty to resist. As Bleikasten argues that "Of [the] four children he is undeniably the one most like her in his mean-spirited egoism, his imperturbable smugness, and his petit-bourgeois concern for propriety" (Bleikasten 109). The third section lively produces a greedy and cruel figure of Jason.

2.2. Mrs. Compson's Indifference: Others' Voices

Mrs. Compson, as a mother, cannot understand Caddy's solicitous wish to see her daughter, instead of driving her out of town and forbidding her name to be mentioned in the house. Had Quentin not been deprived of maternal love, his life might have taken a different course: "If I have could say, Mother. Mother" (SF 108), or again "if I'd just had a mother so I could say Mother Mother" (SF 197). And the same poignant sense of abandonment is revealed by Quentin's remembrance of the picture in the story:

When I was little there was a picture in one of our books, a dark place into which a single weak ray of light came slanting upon two faces lifted out of the shadows. ... I'd have to turn back to it until the dungeon was Mother herself she and Father upward into weak light holding hands and we lost somewhere below even them without even a ray of light (SF 198).

Quentin's projection of the family situation onto this scene of darkness and confinement is eloquent evidence of parental neglect. The cold, egotistical Mrs. Compson has become a lightless prison-womb to her children, keeping them captive, as securely as she would have by possessive love, through what she denied them. Or, to borrow another of Quentin's metaphors, she poisoned them once and for all: "Done in Mother's mind though. Finished. Finished. Then we were all poisoned" (SF 116).

"You'd better do as he says," Mrs. Compson said. "He's head of the house now. It's his right to require us to respect his wishes. I try to do it, and if I can, you can too." Mrs. Compson said to Dilsey" (SF 278). Mrs. Compson considered Jason as her only child and the head of this declining family and she was blind to Jason's cruelty. After Caddy losing her chastity, she secretly married her to a banker regardless of Caddy's own emotion and, when the marriage was broken, she drove her out and ordered the whole family never to mention her name. All these displayed the corruption of humanity within the Compson family. This loveless and repressed family dooms the children abnormal who are like four specters on this wasteland-like environment.

2.3. Mr. Compson's Irresponsibility: Others' Voices

As the head of the whole family, Mr. Compson does not take his due responsibility for his children. He is a weak nihilistic alcoholic, whose pessimism pervades Quentin's part of the story, "because no battle is ever won [he said]. They are not even fought. The field only reveals to man his folly and despair, victory is an illusion of philosophers and fools" (SF 76). This greatly strengthens his son's despair of ultimate failure which leads to his committing suicide finally. When Caddy is divorced by her husband, he rejected to take her back home. Besides, Quentin's monologue echoes with Mr. Compson's cynical remarks on women, and for all his protests and denials he has come to acknowledge the bitter truth that "women are never virgins" (SF 116)

Because women so mysterious Father said. The delicate equilibrium of periodical filth between two moons is balanced. Moons he said full and yellow as harvest moons her hips thighs. Outside of them always but. Yellow. Feet soles with walking like. Then know that some man that all those mysterious and imperious concealed. With all that inside of them shapes an outward suavity waiting for a flabbily filed getting the odor of honeysuckle all mixed up. (SF 128)

We can see his father's contempt attitude toward women and his carelessness for his children. When Caddy is pregnant, he does not give her warmth and help but disown with her, whose carelessness and coldness to Caddy lead to her later complete deprivation. When Quentin facing problems, Mr. Compson does not give good advice but spreads his distress and despair to his son, "Father will be dead in a year they say if he doesn't stop drinking and he won't stop he can't stop since I since last summer and then they'll send Benjy to Jackson ..." (SF 124), whose knowledge does not help him to find a way out. Above all, Mr. Compson's wisdom is knowledge of death, not of life which just affects Quentin to fall into despair, too.

As for Jason, he holds the hatred to his father and when the father dies, he takes the place of him. Through each figure's voice, we can see the image of an irresponsible father. The voices in *The Sound and the Fury* are miscellaneous which sometimes are double direction and sometimes are the secret soliloquy of one's own. Faulkner endows his figures full freedom and independence to form the dialogic text and he acts a role of

observer or recorder to represent their complex humanity. Dong Xiaoying views that the relationship of dialogue is the relationship of agreement and objection, affirmation, and supplement, asking and answering in two different subjects' discourse. (Dong Xiaoying 46) in another word, in a dialogic novel, the author is not in the position of "God", which gifts fully independent voices opposite -center position.

3. The Exploration of Humanity

The Bakhtinian dialogic theory explains a multi-perspective, multi-valued world and dialogue is the essence of humankind's existence. Its meaning is far beyond the literary theory itself. Dialogue in literary texts is featured as independent, un-finalized, and polyphonic. As to humanity in terms of polyphonic, it is complex which synthesizes sense, sensibility, desire, imagination, and will. Humanity concretely displays such as kindness, honesty, justice, tolerance, and sympathy in morals, and cruelty, deception, selfishness, revenge, and greed in evils. Thus, human beings integrate divine and devil.

3.1. The Complexity of Humanity

In *The Sound and the Fury*, Caddy is the typical one who realizes her free will and never loses the ability to love others. The light of humanity is embodied in her fully. Jason, loses his free will and is servile to money-worship, as a result, he loses his freedom and the ability to love, becoming cruel and revengeful to others. Likewise, Mr. Compson and Mrs. Compson both lose their love and their responsibility for their children, and humanity has fallen from them. Also, this concrete humanity fell and the abstract one got the superiority which could drive people to over pursue the material richness, becoming much snobbish and selfish. Perhaps, people like Jason, Mr. Compson, and Mrs. Compson were not aware of their loss of humanity. They do not know what should love, hate, respect, and contempt and humanity is fluid and can be distorted for the situation of society at any time. It is worthy to note that Quentin is the most complex character and his mind is full of struggle. As an intellect and artist-like character, he cannot get rid of the restraint of the past value and finally he escapes from reality through committing suicide. However, Quentin does not lose his love ability and keeps sensitive to the outside world, who is like a philosopher observing and meditating his surroundings. This character owns timidity and ambition, honesty and deception, nobility, and shame on which displays Faulkner's deep exploration of the complicity of humanity.

The multi-perspective in *The Sound and the Fury* has broken through the framework of the story itself. Faulkner is full of sympathy for Caddy who is created as the center of the whole novel. The four sections all relate the same story on Caddy and each one shows a different aspect of her and the narrator's humanity. Therefore, after reading the text, always, many aspects of humanity are left on the reader's mind. It involves innocence, sensibility, love, loyalty and cruelty, revenge, greed, and indifference, etc. On the eternal humanity, what the author wants to note is that humanity is a gifted duality which integrates the images of angel and devil. The author speaks highly of human virtues, such as Benjy's innocence, Quentin's sensitivity and philosophical thinking, Caddy's consideration for Benjy and her encouragement, and Dilesey's genuine loyalty to the whole family. Likewise, he also reveals Jason's coldness and cruelty, Mr. Compson's irresponsibility, and Mrs. Compson's indifference to her children which all expresses his critique for the evils of humanity.

3.2. The Reasons for the Declination of Humanity

The complex humanity corresponds to the dialogic narratives of this novel. In structure, the four perspectives form a great dialogue, where each voice is open and argues with others. As Bakhtin says that "they hear each other constantly, call back and forth to each other, and are reflected in one another" (Bakhtin 75). In this polyphonic novel, the four different views together contribute to the displaying of complex humanity.

3.2.1. The Loss of the Ideal

Against the background of the influence of the north industrial civilization, the traditional south is gradually becoming the commercial modern south. Morality begins to decline and the relationship between people becomes cold and indifferent. The old lifestyle and social customs have gone away which leads to the disintegration of the system of the existential value, the money-worship and direct dealing with money put the southern people to the verge of collapsing which leads to the distorted and alienated humanity. Faulkner uses the disorder of the time to tell the decline of the Compson family, which is in line with each character, that is, Benjy, an idiot, has no sense of time; Quentin lives in the past and desires to stop the time and Mr. Compson falls into nihilism. For them, clocks and watches only make their lives confused, and their heart panic. Thus, Faulkner does not use the order of time in this novel, but destroys the time order and focus on the humanity of its characters. "Dialogism argues that time/ space relation of any particular text will always be perceived in the context of a larger set of time/space relations that obtain in the social and historical environment in which it is read" (Holquist 141), through four section-narratives, we see the corruption running in the Compson family.

3.2.2. The Pursuit of Utilitarianism

The Civil War destroyed many once-great Southern families economically, socially, and psychologically. The northern capitalist industrial power and its value impact the south deeply, which disintegrates the agriculture society and begins its modern progress. Then, there is the conflict between the new and the old values. Faulkner deeply explores the humanity of modern society. *The Sound and the Fury* reflects the history burden of the Old South society spirit heredity and the distorted humanity in the process of pursuing material richness and Quentin and Jason are both typical representatives of the two social situations. The novel displays the development of materialistic civilization and the crisis of spirit civilization, and the falling of humanity, the conflict of the human being's mind, and the relationship between human beings, etc.

Conclusion

In *The Sound and the Fury* Faulkner tells the decline of the Compson family four times from different voices in four sections. Both the exhibition of various humanities and the form of narrative constitute a dialogic novel. Whenever someone else's "truth" is presented in each novel, it is introduced without fail into the dialogic field of vision of all the other major characters of the novel. Dialogue has penetrated inside every word, provoking in it a battle and the interruption of one voice by another. Faulkner describes the different humanity of people there and the present paper attempts a detailed discussion

on the morals and evils of humanity and analyzes the reasons for the complication of humanity. From his process of producing *The Sound and the Fury* and in its characterization, we can observe Faulkner's dialogic devices for engaging humanity.

Beijing Language and Culture University & Queen Mary University of London

Notes

- ¹ The American south includes the southeastern states and the southern states along the Gulf of Mexico. It is a region of extravagant color, of luxuriant foliage and bloom, and scorching sunlight. Its pace is slow and its rhythm of social motion is passive rather than active. <http://thesis.lib.pku.edu.cn>
- ² Heteroglossia, the condition of being located external to other-languedness, the condition of containing many separate and different worlds. (Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*: EDITOR'S PREFACE xxxiii)
- ³ The hero knows that all these definitions, prejudiced as well as objective, rest in his hands and he cannot finalize them precisely. His consciousness of self lives by its unfinalizability, by its unclosedness and its indeterminacy. (Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*: 53)
- ⁴ *The Sound and the Fury*, the followings will be abbreviated as *SF*.

Works Cited

- Ailen, Concord. "William Faulkner: The Novel as Form." In *William Faulkner: Three Decades of Criticism*. Ed. Frederick J. Hoffman and Olga W. Vickery, 135-41. New York: Harcourt, 1960.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail M. *The Dialogic Imagination*. Trans. Caryl Emerson & Michael Holquist. Ed. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981.
- . *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Trans. Caryl Emerson. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.
- . "Forms of Time and the Chronotope in the Novel: Notes toward a Historical Poetics." *Dialogic Imagination*. Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984.
- Beck, Warren. *William Faulkner*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1976.
- Bleikasten, Andre. *The Ink of Melancholy: Faulkner's Novels from The Sound and the Fury to Light in August*. Indiana University Press, 1990.
- Dowling, David. *Modern Novelists William Faulkner*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989.
- Faulkner, William. *The Sound and the Fury*. New York: Random House, 1984.
- . *Essays, Speeches and Public Letters* James B. Meriwether, eds. New York: Random House, 1965.
- . *Selected Letters of William Faulkner*. New York: Vintage Books, 1965.
- . *Faulkner in the University*. Ed. Frederick L. Gwynn and Joseph L. Blotner. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1959.
- Guan, Jianming. *Faulkner's Texts in the Postmodern Context*. Guang Zhou: Zhong Shan University Press, 2010.
- Hale, Dorothy J. "As I Lay Dying's Heterogeneous Discourse." *Novel: A Forum on Fiction*. Vol.23, No.1. (Autumn, 1989).

- Harold, Bloom, ed. *William Faulkner: Modern Critical Views*. New York: Chelsea, 1986.
- Holquist, Michael. *Dialogism: Bakhtin and his World*. New York: Routledge, 2002.
- Humphrey, Robert. *Stream of Consciousness in the Modern Novel*. London: University of California Press, 1954.
- Liu, Jianhua. *Faulkner's Textualization of Subalternities*. Beijing: Peking University Press, 2002.
- Moreland, Richard C. *Faulkner and Modernism: Rereading and Rewriting*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990.
- Nicholson, E. C., and R.W. Stevenson. *York Notes William Faulkner The Sound and the Fury*. Beijing: World Publishing Corporation, 1989.
- Parini, Jay. *One Matchless Time: A Life of William Faulkner*. Beijing: China CITIC Press, 2007.
- Polk, Noel. *New Essays on The Sound and the Fury*. Beijing: Peking University Press, 2007.
- Rimmon-Kenan, Shlomith. *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics*. London and New York: Routledge, 1983.
- Shakespeare, William. *Macbeth*. Stamford: Thomson Learning, 1965.
- Wagner, Linda W. Ed. *William Faulkner: Four Decades of Criticism*. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1973.
- Toming. *A History of American Literature*. Nanjing: Yilin Press, 2005.
- 李文俊. 福克纳评论集. 北京: 中国社会科学出版社, 1980.
- [Li, Wenjun. *Essays on Faulkner*. Beijing: China Social Science Press, 1980.]
- 洛克. 叶启芳, 瞿菊农译, 政府论 (下篇). 北京: 商务印书馆, 1964.
- [Locke, Trans. Ye Qifang, Qu Junong. *On Government* (part 2). Beijing: The Commercial Press, 1964.]
- 孟子. 万丽华, 蓝旭译注, 孟子. 北京: 中华书局, 2006.
- [Mencius, Annotated. Wan Lihua, Lanxu. *Mencius*. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2006.]
- 肖明翰. 威廉·福克纳研究. 北京: 外语与教学研究出版社, 1997.
- [Xiao, Minghan. *The Study of William Faulkner*. Beijing: Foreign Language and Teaching Research Press, 1997.]
- 王祖友. 《跨越时空的对话——〈传统与现代的对话〉: 威廉·福克纳创作艺术研
- [Wang, Zuyou. "Dialogue across time and Space: *Dialogue between Tradition and Modernity: A Study of William Faulkner's Creative Arts*." *Contemporary Foreign Language Studies*, 2011: (1)]
- 董小英. 再登巴比伦塔——巴赫金与对话理论. 上海: 三联书店, 1994.
- [Dong, Xiaoying. "Climbing the Tower of Babylon again: Bakhtin and the Theory of Dialogue." Shanghai: Sanlian Bookstore, 1994]

Aesthetics and Ethics: Convergence and Divergence in Plato and Aristotle

SANGEETHA PUTHIYEDATH & SREEDHARAN T.

Abstract

To explore the dialectic between aesthetics and ethics and the point of convergence and divergence between the two is a fraught exercise. The difficulty is further complicated by the lack of consensus in the interpretation of the terms 'aesthetics' and 'ethics.' For instance, the distance between the antimony of Kant's view of morality as a series of imperatives dictated by practical reason which considerably narrowed the scope of morality by confining it to repeated actions and Wittgenstein's aphoristic dictum that "ethics and aesthetics are one," is considerable. However, historically the teleological argument regarding literature and aesthetic appreciation has been predicated on ethics from the time of Plato. This paper is an attempt to uncover the assumptions regarding the relationship between aesthetics and ethics in the classical period through a comparative study of the aesthetic theories associated with Plato and Aristotle.

Keywords: aesthetics, ethics, non-perspectival truth, artistic autonomy, ladder of love

To trace the origin of the word "aesthetic" is not difficult, but to excavate the origin of aesthetic thought or philosophy might prove much more challenging. Even an archaeological unearthing of the earliest surviving philosophical texts that deal with aesthetics will only prove that the consciousness of the aesthetic predates those texts. The philosophical discipline of aesthetics received its name only in 1735. Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten introduced the term in his Halle master's thesis to mean *epistêmê aïsthetikê*, or the science of what is sensed and imagined (Guyer 2016). He elaborated the term in *Meditations on Poetry*: "The Greek philosophers ... have always carefully distinguished between the *aïstheta* and the *noeta*," that is, between objects of sense and objects of thought, and while the latter, that is, "what can be cognized through the higher faculty" of mind, are "the object of logic, the *aïstheta* are the subject of the *episteme aïsthetike* or aesthetics," the science of perception (*Meditationes*, CXVI, p. 86) (Guyer 2016).

The history of aesthetics in Western thought, can be traced back to the Classical period in Greek antiquity. Aesthetic enquiry in Greece is as old as Greek poetry. In fact, even the English term "poetry" owes its origin to the Greek verb *poiein* "to make," and *poetes* "maker." Some of the early thought about literature in Greece can be drawn from the tales about mythical poets-musicians, such as Orpheus and Amphion. Both these semi-divine mythical characters occupy exalted positions and were considered teacher-poets, inspired beings – even victims of divine creative fury – which allows them to access a vision of cosmic harmony. The Greeks held Homer and Hesiod as belonging to that

lineage. To comprehend the exalted position occupied by the poets in ancient Greece one has to understand the position accorded to poetry by the Greeks. Poetry in the period predating Plato, occupied a space akin to a religious text. The Greeks held that their myths embodied universal truths and used them to educate, guide, regulate, and of course, to entertain. Poetry was considered a source of secular and non-secular knowledge and practice at the individual, social and cultural levels. However, over a period of time poetry lost its pre-eminence and by the classical period in Greece, philosophy was emerging as a strong contender and increasingly claiming exclusive access to Truth. It is this rivalry that Plato underscores when he refers to the “ancient quarrel of poetry and philosophy” (*Republic* 607b). Poetry was a formidable opponent to Philosophy, playing, as Catherine Everett remarks perceptively, “a part in Greek life comparable to the Bible in the Christian era,” (2). In Everett’s view, “It was against this combination of myth and poetry, embodying an ancient and reverend outlook on life and interpretation of the nature of things that the philosophers of the Greek Enlightenment, the Cosmologists and Sophists, had to assert their claims” (2). Seen from that vantage, it is obvious that poetry did not appear to philosophy as a work of art, to be subjected to critical scrutiny, but a rival that claimed equality.

Plato does not focus on literature or poetry exclusively in his writings. Yet, one can claim that he is the first critic in Western intellectual tradition who examined it as an art form and interrogated the reasons behind its appeal. As such, he can be considered as the originator of aesthetic thought in Western tradition. Though Plato’s focus was not on poetry, he repeatedly returns to it in many ‘Dialogues’ while discussing his abiding concerns like education, morality, theology and metaphysics. The most extensive treatment of the arts occurs in Book II, III, and Book X in the *Republic*. Because his views on art are scattered throughout his works it is difficult to extract a coherent theory about his approach to literature. This paper proposes to examine Plato’s critique of poets and poetry and compare it with those of his immediate successor, Aristotle. It is also an attempt to uncover the assumptions regarding the relationship between aesthetics and ethics in these two philosophers.

The Greek conception of art was quite different from present day understanding of it. The word *techne*, which we translate as ‘craftsmanship,’ ‘craft’ or ‘art,’ was used to refer to all skilful production from poetry to carpentry, saddle-making to weaving. The Greeks did not possess a term that referred exclusively to fine arts. The Greek attitude to those who engaged in the arts was also complex. The artists or artisans were valued for the knowledge they possessed, but they were disdainful of the toil involved in the production of art, which in the eyes of the Greeks reduced the artist to the level of a skilled labourer. For the Greeks the most natural division of the arts was into those that were free and those that were servile, depending on the amount of physical exertion involved in its execution. ‘Free arts’ – like poetry were esteemed more than the playing of musical instruments like the lyre or singing.

When we look at the poetics that implicitly prevailed before Plato, we can see that poets like Homer had considered the question of ‘pleasure’ that poetry generates and Simonides made the insightful observation that painting is ‘silent poetry’ and poetry is ‘spoken painting.’ However, since the beginning of the classical period in Greece, aesthetic thought existed within the larger framework of philosophy. This yoking of aesthetics with philosophy brought within its ambit questions that are universally valid. Inflected with philosophical concerns, the discussion of art was subsumed under the discussion

of its ethical import. This does not mean that the philosophical approach to art was homogenous. There were as many approaches as there were different schools of thought in philosophy during that time. For instance, the Sophists, being relativists, regarded ethical norms and values contingently. Socrates, who challenged the Sophists, raised humanist problems similar to those presented by them, but his focus or emphasis was radically different. He (or what has been reported as Socrates's views) was strongly opposed to relativism. His student Plato, held absolute views on the question of ethics, and his approach to aesthetics is infused with this concern. Plato's writing is often akin to poetry in its supremely skilful use of metaphor, myth, and rhetoric. Yet he viewed poetry with suspicion and sought to devalue it. The reason is obvious. Plato (and Socrates) considered the role of philosophy as of much greater value than of poetry. His writings are a deliberate attempt to oust mimetic poetry from its central role in the culture of his day. The ultimate aim of Plato's dramatic portrayals and his poetic use of language is, however, not to bring pleasure or to engage the mind in emotional experiences. Rather, it is to prompt independent inquiry into the truth by means of rational inquiry and argument. Plato aims to supplant poetry in order to establish philosophy as a discipline. In so doing, he raises profound questions about the relationship between philosophy and art – questions that go into the nature and function of art itself.

Plato's critique of poetry reflect his reservation about the nature of influence of poetry. It could be observed that Plato views the ways of life guided by poets and poetry as the "way of *mýthos*," and the one guided by philosophy, the "way of *logos*." According to Plato, the way of the *mýthos* is the way of *doxa* or opinion, whereas, the way of *logos*, is the way of Knowledge or Truth (*epistémé*), and wisdom (*Sophia*). While the former is the way of the aesthetic, appealing to the imaginative and the emotional aspect of man, the latter is the search for the truth or the real, based on rational grounds. Plato's objection to the "way of mythos" is rooted in his attitude to morality and ethics. He finds poetry amoral, or indifferent to moral concerns.

Plato was not ignorant of the extraordinary appeal exercised by art. It was his recognition of its power over people that urges him to question the nature of that power and its desirability. Plato's contemporaries considered poetry as manuals, providing guidelines for right living, war, statecraft, even divinity. Plato questions the poet's qualification to represent things that he had very little knowledge of. In his works beginning from *Apology*, through *Ion* and his later work *Laws*, he constantly harps on the fact that poets presume to compose on subjects that they hardly know. He points out that when challenged on this aspect, the poet responds by claiming that he is divinely inspired: "... when they composed, they composed not by wisdom, but by nature and because they were inspired, like the prophets and givers of oracles, for these also say many fine things, but know none of the things they say" (22c). Plato finds this problematic, especially because the Greeks looked up to the poets for guidance. As Robert Stecker remarks, "In Plato's Athens, poetry was thought to be a repository of both knowledge and wisdom. Plato questions not only whether this reputation is deserved, but also whether poetry in particular, and art in general, might in fact create a barrier to the acquisition of these goods" (Stecker 9).

Plato also considers the desirability of poetic stories in education. He does not question whether, they should be a part of education, but deliberates on the kind of poetry that should be excluded. Plato's objection is on two counts. Firstly, poetry contains falsehood about the nature of gods and the behaviour of heroes. Secondly, stories can instil harmful attitudes and can encourage negative dispositions. Plato feels that the preeminent

literature of ancient Greece – the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* of Homer, the poetry of Hesiod, the tragedies of Aeschylus – all had passages that should be expunged. He also objected to death being portrayed as a great misfortune, evoking grief, expressed in wailings, loud lamentations, and through other excessive expressions. Plato insists that this was an entirely wrong approach to death and that if one lived courageously, one would place death in proper perspective. He wanted poetry to infuse the right perspective by representing role models such as heroes who possess such attitudes. Plato would prefer to exclude what he considers as negative portrayal, or, if included, to place such misguided attitudes in the mouths of characters who are not role models.

It is obvious that Plato is advancing a strict censorship of poetry. He does not want to do away with the use of poetry in educating the young but advocates a stringent method of selection of what is appropriate. Plato calls poetry, or all representational art as “*pseudeis logoi*,” which could be translated as “false discourses” [or even as “fictional stories,”]. He equivocally states that it can be a source of illusion and false belief and is capable of corrupting the psyche of the listener/viewer. To comprehend Plato’s antagonism to representational arts, one needs to have an understanding of the role of human life, as envisaged by him. “Plato pictures human life as a pilgrimage from appearance to reality. The intelligence, seeking satisfaction, moves from uncritical acceptance of sense experience and of conduct, to a more sophisticated and morally enlightened understanding,” (4) observes Murdoch. Murdoch locates Plato’s antagonism to art in his emphasis on true knowledge. “How is it that although *sensa* are in a flux we can have *knowledge*, as opposed to mere opinion or belief?” Plato questions urging people to discover an “understanding” which was beyond the fluctuating notions about beauty. Hence, his postulation of the Forms (Ideas) as changeless eternal non-sensible objects which are separate from the multifarious and shifting world of ‘becoming.’ These steady entities are guarantors equally of the unity and objectivity of morals and the reliability of knowledge (Murdoch 4). This aspiration appears to be the crux of Plato’s critique. Artists, Plato avers is more interested in appearances, and ignore reality. They exhibit the lowest and most irrational kind of awareness, *eikasia*, pursue entertainment and seek to entertain others. Artists are more interested in portraying “bad men” because they are “various, entertaining and extreme” while “good men” are “quiet and always the same”. Art both expresses and gratifies the lowest part of the soul, asserts Plato, and feeds and enlivens base emotions that ought to be left to wither.

Plato’s concept of beauty is intricately linked to what Diotima in a dialogue with Socrates, refers to as “*scala amoris*” or “ladder of love” in the *Symposium*. Envisaged as a metaphorical ladder leading to the Form of Beauty, this ladder has six rungs. Some scholars section the six steps into two groups of three. “Sectioning them out into two groups of three allows scholars to view the Ladder in terms of personhood vs. conceptual; the first three – body, bodies, and soul – point the lover to connect with personhood. On the other hand, the conceptual steps – laws, knowledge, and Beauty itself – direct attention to conceptual ideas,” observes Kyle J. Keesling Jr. Plato examines the realisation of a true understanding of Beauty through a dialogue between Socrates and Diotima in six steps. One initially becomes acquainted with Beauty by falling in love with a particular person (here the body). The second rung in Plato’s Ladder of Love finds a lover’s recognition of the fact that beauty exists not merely in the lover’s body but in similar bodies. His broadening vision is a movement from one to many. The third rung in the ladder leads lover from the body towards the individual’s soul. The lover recognises the lack of depth

in his attraction towards the body. He realises that his love is for the other's soul, not the body. The fourth step of the ladder, sees the lover gradually expanding his circle of love. He recognizes the value of the institutions and laws that created the beauty of the person's soul. The fifth rung guides the lover towards the idea of beauty. He comprehends Beauty as knowledge. This will ultimately lead him to a philosophical understanding of beauty. On the sixth and final rung, the lover reaches, the Form of Beauty, which is the final destination. Once he reaches the final rung, he can appreciate true Beauty, devoid of corporeal or conceptual representations (see Keesling).

Plato forwards a way of life located in philosophical understanding, the way of the *dialectic*, as a counter to the way of the *aesthetic*. The Dialectical method involves a close examination and interrogation of the constituent aspects of reality and the ideas associated with reality while the latter appeals to the imaginative and emotional aspects. Through the former, man is able to ascend to a higher level of perception and understanding, to a higher order of intelligence. The culmination of dialectical reasoning will lead man to the absolute – an apprehension of the oneness of goodness, intelligence and beauty.

Plato's metaphysical presupposition that unity is necessary and desirable in the individual as well as in the ideal state leads him to propose a rule of the Republic by 'guardians' specially nurtured and educated for the purpose. He takes some pains to elaborate the kind of education he envisages for the guardians. The Guardians after their initial study of music and gymnastics, must undertake the study of unity "as such" (VII 524e). They should also be trained in arithmetic, geometry and astronomy as these sciences foster the use of reason rather than the senses. The most fundamental strategy towards the political implementation of unity, Plato feels, is to unite the functions of ruler and philosopher. Plato held the current dissociation of these roles responsible to a large extent for the anarchic plurality and fragmentation that he could perceive in the Greek city states. M.A.R. Habib comments:

Plato here unwittingly reveals that, if the movement toward knowledge and justice is essentially a movement toward unity whether in individual or state, it is also a movement of coercion. The ruling faculty in the soul and the ruling body in the state do not unify any real differences: the unity Plato has in mind is achieved by suppressing all difference and imperiously positing itself as the constant inner structure of a given type of variety in the physical world. (Habib 35)

In the *Laws*, his last work, which describes a completely stable society, Plato is definite about the role of art. He expounds the didactic use of art and the manner by which it should be deployed. Music and song are to be sanctified and rendered changeless, as in Egypt, where "the paintings and sculptures of ten thousand years ago are no better and no worse than those of today". Even children's games are to be controlled with the larger purpose in mind (767 b). The citizenry will be 'compelled to sing willingly, as it were' (670 d). People will be trained from earliest years to enjoy only good pleasures, and poets will be forced to explain that the just man is always happy (695d, 660 e). The most important citizen in the state will be the Minister of Education (765 d). The best literary paradigm for the writer to look to, will be the book of the *Laws* (975 d).

Plato appears to have understood that hegemony is not an automatic process that can be taken for granted, but must be achieved through conscious and deliberate effort and planning. In this he foreshadows Gramsci, who advocated the moulding of subjectivity itself towards unconscious complicity with the aims of the rulers to pre-empt the need for excessive and dangerously provocative coercion by law at a later stage. If the Republic

was sanitized from its inception, one can preclude the possibility of a future rebellion or revolt. The meticulous system of censorship advocated by Plato in *Laws* and the *Republic* almost echoes the absolute censorship effectively deployed by the Stalinists in Russia and the Maoists in China. The enigmatic question why did one of the earliest experiments in democracy also throws up one of the most extensive system of censorship ever advocated by man is an interesting one and will have to be answered at some point.

Through his observations on the intersection of aesthetics and morality, Plato had deliberately set to impose a closure on the question on the role of art and its place in society. The history of aesthetics is in a sense an attempt to answer Plato. Aristotle was the first in a long line of thinkers who attempted to re-examine the issues foregrounded by Plato and to draw alternative conclusions from it. He endeavoured to pry open the closure and reveal the fissure glossed over by the compelling arguments raised by Plato using the very medium that he sought to warn people against – language.

“How does the objective validity of aesthetic judgments compare with the objective validity of moral judgments and scientific beliefs?” (26) asks Richard W. Miller in his article, “Three versions of objectivity: aesthetic, moral, and scientific”. He argues that “aesthetic and moral appraisals both utterly lack the cognitive authority of scientific inquiry,” since the appraiser cannot be free of her own judgement.” However, he also admits that there is a branch of philosophy that accords aesthetic and moral judgments “the same cognitive authority as well-formed scientific beliefs, because in all three realms the judgment maker is often in a position to assert a truth independent of her judgments” (26). Aristotle would have concurred with the view that aesthetic judgement can aspire to the cognitive authority of scientific laws. In fact, his approach to aesthetics was predicated on this belief in the possibility of independent, rational judgement of art.

Ideologically, Aristotle occupies a position similar to that of Plato – he does not concede even a provisional autonomy to art. (The question whether art can ever have autonomy considering the fact that it is ideologically compromised even before its inception should be temporarily suspended). Aristotle’s writings on art, *Poetics* has been called “the first and most important work of a philosophical account of an art form” (Curran 21) because it is the first text devoted to analysing art in western tradition. The Greek title, *Peri poietikês* “On the poetic [craft]” identifies it as a work devoted to analysing the craft. From the surviving text, it is clear that it was not conceived as an instructional manual aimed at advising playwrights but as a guide for the student of philosophy to study these works in order to uncover the knowledge that is implicit in the successful production of the poetic craft. As Curran notes, “Aristotle’s goal is not practical, but philosophical, and he draws on the views he has developed in other areas of his philosophy, especially metaphysics, psychology, and ethics” (22).

Aristotle wrote two treatises on ethics: the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Eudemian Ethics*¹. He approaches what he calls “*ta êthika*” with a discussion of *eudaimonia* (“happiness”), and the nature of *aretê* (“virtue”, “excellence”). Aristotle follows Socrates and Plato in emphasizing the centrality of virtue to a well-lived life. Like his contemporaries, Aristotle too was concerned with the socio-political implications of art and conceded that poetry was capable of influencing people. However, he argued that its impact need not be necessarily insidious. In fact, Aristotle’s *Poetics*, while it examines the ideas and issues raised by Plato, focuses mainly on what is good art and deductively draws rules for judging art from the existing texts. In his extant works, we can notice that he relies on categorization and logical differentiation. The *Poetics* demonstrate Aristotle’s analytical

method, which is homologous to his examinations of biology or zoology. In the *Poetics* Aristotle turns to the various categories of human artefacts, differentiating those made in language. His focus is on poetry, especially the “species-specific” (87) traits of epic and tragedy. Drawing on the rich and wide stock of existing literary examples, especially Sophocles’ celebrated tragedy *Oedipus Rex*, Aristotle adduces six salient parts of tragedy in order of their importance – plot, character, thought, diction, music and spectacle. He then forwards a definition of tragedy, which is formulated at the start of the *Poetics*: “Tragedy is the mimesis of a serious and complete action of some magnitude; in language embellished in various ways in its different parts; in dramatic, not narrative form; achieving, through pity and fear, the catharsis of such passions” (*Poetics* 1449b 24-28). The cornerstone on which Aristotle built his entire defence of tragedy was on catharsis, mimesis, action, and seriousness. These four concepts join together to produce the central argument of the *Poetics*. Later centuries layered these words with meaning they originally did not possess. Thus, catharsis, over time came to denote “purgation of excess emotions.” Critics like Nussbaum, Halliwell and Curran, argue that this interpretation involves a misreading of the original term and its meaning. They equate *catharsis* with ethical and intellectual clarification².

Aristotle held that tragedy, by rousing powerful emotions teaches man to feel pity and fear. That understanding forms part of the groundwork for ethical behaviour, since Aristotle’s ethics connects ethical behaviour to well-trained emotions. The emotions that Plato deplored are acknowledged as existing in tragedy, but they benefit ethical action instead of subverting it. Aristotle does not challenge Plato directly. However, he implicitly validates poetry by examining it as a legitimate branch of study. Plato’s assertion that poetry raises treacherous emotions, which is dangerous for society, is logically refuted. Aristotle sees poetry as a repository of universal knowledge of human behaviour. As Curran insightfully remarks:

What the audience takes away from tragedy, then, need not be an understanding akin to the study of essences that the philosopher examines, but some more modest insight about human behavior, one that nonetheless has practical implications for how everyone – ordinary people as well as virtuous persons – manages their emotions in real-life circumstances. (31)

Another aspect, which Aristotle brings under critical scrutiny, is the idea of “mimesis.” Aristotle states that mimesis is “natural to people from childhood” (*Poetics* 1448b 6). While Plato considered image-making as a movement away from the real, Aristotle sees it as a realisation of the natural propensities in man. He further argues that mimesis is natural and pleasant because it is a way of learning and human beings love to learn (*Metaphysics* I.1). Aristotle’s argument rests on a new conception of mimesis as an active process of selective presentation. For example, a line drawing can show a thing’s contours better than the thing itself. Plato conceptualized mimesis as something passive, as automatic mimicry, even comparing it to the act of holding a mirror up to objects (*Republic* 596 d). Aristotle brings the effort back into poetry, as in his remark about plot: “A poet must be a composer of plots rather than of verses, insofar as he is a poet according to representation, and represents actions” (*Poetics* 1451b 27–29).

Aristotle bases his criticism of Plato’s ideal state on the fact that it was confined to utilitarian ends. Aristotle’s own state, in contrast was directed towards the highest good, enabling men to live “the good life”. In his *Poetics* he suggests that an integral aspect of this good life is the leisure to engage in civilized pursuits as “unbecoming of those of a

broad vision." Aristotle insists on an organic connection between pleasure (for example, derived from music) and virtue. Virtue, says Aristotle, has to do with enjoying oneself in the right way: liking and hating the right things. Aristotle's psychological insight is evident when he concludes that ethical regard forms an important basis for the reader's reaction to dramatic characters. Curran notes how "Aristotle recommends plot patterns that are based on the likely ethical regard the audience will take toward the characters," and remarks that "Audiences feel pity and fear for good and decent characters who err, but are not morally vicious; they feel moral confusion when an exceptionally good person suffers due to no fault of her own; and they feel repulsed when a vicious person triumphs" (31-32). In *Poetics* Aristotle claims that this sentiment is equally applicable to poetry. Since music has the power to heighten certain positive characteristics, it must form a part of education. Music is all the more valuable in educating the young, says Aristotle because it is pleasant. Many critics including Horace and Sydney would later echo this sentiment.

Art according to Aristotle achieves its purpose when it gives pleasure. The pleasure that art gives varies according to the character of art and the taste and age of the audience. However, Aristotle is convinced that even the pleasure of rational enjoyment, which he considers is the highest form of enjoyment art can afford, cannot be an end in itself. In fact any 'good' that imitative art can furnish can be considered as an end in itself because they are instrumental arts. Aristotle believes that the most authoritative art, which he considers is truly the master art is the ethical and the political, which brings us back to Plato's "royal art of philosopher king" (Everett 80). Catherine Everett observes:

Aristotle thus emerges from his long consideration of the imitative arts, particularly music and poetry, near the place where Plato takes his stand. The royal art of the statesman is for both the ultimate authority in the disposing and regulating of the ministry to pleasure. [However] Aristotle is slower than Plato in passing adverse moral judgment on popular amusements. (81-82)

Aristotle differs from Plato's view on other points as well. Malleability is a trait that is censored by Plato. For him steadfastness of purpose and singleness of function were desirable qualities and in his ideal state one man had only one function. For Aristotle, malleability was a characteristic of both the poet and philosopher. According to him a philosopher who is devoted to learning the truth of being can only do so by adapting himself with infinitely graduated responsiveness to the peculiar character of stimuli. Plato convincingly argued the differences between the philosopher and the imitative artist, while Aristotle refuses to concede any such differences. Plato's definition of the philosopher as a spectator of universal truth is held by Aristotle as encompassing the artist as well and while Plato castigates the poet for assuming a multitude of shapes and asserts that the philosophers' glory is his single minded nature Aristotle claims infinity plasticity for both.

In his later years, Plato also appears to concede the importance of pleasure in effecting change in human beings. In *The Laws* he dismisses his earlier stress on the pre-eminence accorded to reason in guiding human beings and emphasises the need to fuse it with pleasure:

As Plato grows older, he recognizes more and more that art is the specific for shaping emotion, and that pleasures and pains, thus moulded to good ends, are the indispensable allies of reason. In the *Phaedrus* Plato makes reason a charioteer who rules his steeds; later in the *Laws* he makes reason a weak cord which cannot draw the human puppet in the right way without the cooperating force of pleasure-cords (Everett 44)

It should be remembered that when Aristotle proposes to examine poetry 'in itself,' he is not proposing a twentieth century autonomy, wherein poetry could be looked at independent of other factors. Aristotle's universe is effectively a closed system where each entity is guided by an internalized purpose towards the fulfilment of its own nature, and ultimately towards realization of its harmony with the divine. The notion of poetic autonomy as developed in modern times, the notion of poetry as an end in itself would have been as meaningless to Aristotle as an individual's claim to complete psychological freedom. Therefore, if one asks whether Aristotle's account of poetry belongs within the purview of aesthetics, a formalist aesthetician might raise objections. His argument would be that Aristotle justifies poetry by appealing to its ethical and pedagogical effects. To a formalist aesthetician, such an argument would be unacceptable as Aristotle's grounds for artistic success are non-intrinsic and is a distraction from a work's aesthetic properties.

Aesthetics theories originated in the Classical period in Greece and its history has been determined to a large extent by Plato and Aristotle. One should also bear in mind that the even in antiquity the aesthetic theories were not uniformly accepted. Some concepts, like the theory that beauty depends upon the relation of parts, won common acceptance. Other ideas like the value of art, however, caused extensive disputes. Still others like the concept of autonomy of art underwent gradual changes. With the advent of Christianity aesthetic theories underwent further transformations. Justification of the arts, one can see was an abiding concern for both the theoreticians of antiquity and the Middle ages. Whether it was Plato's moralistic interpretation of art, or the Epicurean Judgement based purely on utilitarian principles, or the mystical elements in late antiquity or the spiritual element in the middle ages art was seen as a handmaiden to the larger cause. The doctrine of *orthotes*, that is, of rightness or the guarantee of the excellence of a work of art through its compatibility with universal laws, is one of the most enduring contribution of ancient aesthetics.

The English and Foreign Languages University (EFLU), Hyderabad, India

Notes

¹ Aristotle does not himself use either of these titles. The words "*Eudemian*" and "*Nicomachean*" were added later, perhaps because the former was edited by his friend, Eudemus, and the latter by his son, Nicomachus. (Source: "Aristotle's Ethics" Richard Kraut *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* 2018)

² The philosophical discipline of aesthetics did not receive its name until 1735, when the twenty-one year old Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten introduced it in his Halle master's thesis to mean *epistēmē aisthetikē*, or the science of what is sensed and imagined (Baumgarten, *Meditationes* §CXVI, 86–7). Baumgarten's *Meditations on Poetry* conclude with his famous introduction of the term "aesthetics": "The Greek philosophers and the Church fathers have always carefully distinguished between the *aistheta* and the *noeta*," that is, between objects of sense and objects of thought, and while the latter, that is, "what can be cognized through the higher faculty" of mind, are "the object of logic, the *aistheta* are the subject of the episteme *aisthetike* or AESTHETICS," the science of perception (*Meditationes*, CXVI, 86).

Works Cited

- Curran, Angela. "Aristotle" in *Aesthetics: The Key Thinkers*. Giovannelli, Alessandro, ed. London: Continuum. 2012. p 21- 33.
- Gilbert, Katherine Everett and Hemut Kuhn. *A History of Esthetics*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1954.
- Giovannelli, Alessandro, ed. *Aesthetics: The Key Thinkers*. London: Continuum. 2012.
- Guyer, Paul, "18th Century German Aesthetics", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2016 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2016/entries/aesthetics-18th-german/>>.
- Hall, Donald E. *Subjectivity*. New York: Routledge, 2004. Print
- Keesling, Kyle J. Jr. "Plato's *Symposium*: An Analysis of "The Ladder of Love" and Its Implications in the World of Art" [https://www.academia.edu/36710162/ Plato's Symposium_An_Analysis_of_The_Ladder_of_Love_and_Its_Implications_in_the_World_of_Art](https://www.academia.edu/36710162/Plato's_Symposium_An_Analysis_of_The_Ladder_of_Love_and_Its_Implications_in_the_World_of_Art)
- Kraut, Richard, "Aristotle's Ethics", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2018 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2018/entries/aristotle-ethics/>>.
- Miller, Richard W. "Three Versions of Objectivity: Aesthetic, Moral, and Scientific." In *Aesthetics and Ethics: Essays at the Intersection*, ed. Jerrold Levinson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p 26-58.
- Murdoch, Iris. "From *The Fire and the Sun: Why Plato Banished the Artists.*" In Denham, A. E., ed. *Plato on Art and Beauty*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan 2012. p 3-33.
- Nussbaum, Martha. *The Fragility of Goodness*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1986.
- Nehamas, Alexander. 1999. *Virtues of Authenticity: Essays on Plato and Socrates*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, Part III, "Plato: Questions of Beauty and the Arts," 252-299.
- Plato. *Plato: Complete Works*. J. M. Cooper (ed.). Indianapolis, IN: Hackett. 1997.
- Rorty, Amélie, ed. *Essays on Aristotle's Poetics*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. 1992.
- Stecker, Robert. "Plato" in *Aesthetics: The Key Thinkers*. Giovannelli, Alessandro, ed. London: Continuum. 2012. 8-20.
- Tatarkiewicz, Wladyslaw. *History of Aesthetics. Vol I, II*. The Hague: Mouton, 1970.
- Habib. M.A.R. "Identity and Difference: Plato and Aristotle on Democracy." <https://habib.camden.rutgers.edu/talks/plato-and-aristotle/>

Demystification of the “Innocent Eye”: Nelson Goodman, Ernst H. Gombrich, and the Limitation of Conventionalism

BOWEN WANG

Abstract

Both literary and artistic historiography has been devoted to exploring the basic relationship between the real world and the work of art, from the mimetic theories of Plato and Aristotle to the contemporary theorists, i.e. Nelson Goodman and Ernst H. Gombrich. Their attempts to probe into the nature of pictorial representation mainly respond to two questions: What is the relationship between representation and that it is to represent (between picture and reality)? What is the mechanism of, or in an ontological sense, what is representation? Guided by these two questions, my article will critically investigate the models of Goodman’s and Gombrich’s representation theory on account of convention rather than resemblance, expression, or imitation.

Keywords: representation; conventionalism; Goodman; Gombrich; innocent eye

The mimetic theory of representation presupposes a fundamental distinction between the visual/pictorial and the verbal/linguistic representation. The former, as formulated by Plato in his *Republic* at the beginning of western philosophy, is determined by the resemblance of the perceptible world through the copying or imitating act of the absolute Form in the Ideal world (63), whereas the mechanism of language operates in the Saussurean sort of “semantically significant structures” (Hyman and Bantinaki) based on a system of socio-cultural conventions. In the latter part of the twentieth century, however, Nelson Goodman and Ernest H. Gombrich have substantially challenged this division and the Platonic theory of representation behind it. They argue for a conventionalist view that all pictorial representation is conventional, which implies that the art itself like philosophy and science can be viewed as a cognitive way of understanding and a creative process of shaping the reality, rather than a mode of mimesis or imitation.

Both literary and artistic historiography has been devoted to exploring the basic relationship between the reality and the work of art, from the mimetic theories of Plato and Aristotle to the contemporary art historians and critics. Their attempts to probe into the nature of pictorial representation mainly respond to two questions (Wollheim 185-90): What is the relationship between the picture as an artwork and the depicted in real world? What is the apparatus of, or in an ontological sense, what is representation? Guided by these two questions, therefore, my article will highlight the common idea of conventionality in models of Goodman’s and Gombrich’s representation theories and further identify their different stances toward it. Having compared their theoretical frameworks, my discussion will move toward a main concern about the limitation of their conventionalism. For Goodman, an “extreme relativist” (Mitchell 81), his limitation

can be discerned in his functionalist and formalist approach to a symbol scheme, and his ahistorical and value-free interest in his theorisation of conventional representation, *e.g.* his treatment of realism in opposition to the notion of great realism in the view of Georg Lukács. Gombrich, on the other hand, shows his indeterminate attitudes from the conventionalist position, then to a revised stance in which he begins to question the reliability of the convention and emphasise the naturalness of art. Finally, the value and the limitation of their similar yet distinctive systems of conventionalism will allow me a conclusion.

Goodman's and Gombrich's Theories of Representation

Goodman's *Languages of Art: An Approach to a Theory of Symbols* (1976) and Gombrich's *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation* (1960), both have shown their ambitions to defend a conventionalist theory of art by establishing a systematic knowledge of pictorial representation as part of the contemporary aesthetics, however by different methods. As the title suggests, Goodman's monograph bases on a "systematic inquiry" (*Languages of Art* xi) by the structuralist linguistic approach, a tradition of analytic philosophy, foregrounding the role of symbol in the representational relationship between the artistic and the real world. To respond to Wollheim's two basic questions, Goodman starts from dissociating representation from resemblance, namely a breakup from the obsolete idea of mimetic theory by pulling out its roots. Resemblance is a "dyadic relation" while representation is "triadic" (Files 405), for resemblance is merely a copy or physical reflection between the representation-bearer and the representational object, but Goodman argues that representation should involve the role of denotation as "the core [...] independent of resemblance" (LA 5). Goodman's denotation here, is a requisite relationship of symbolisation or reference between a picture and the object it stands for. It is a cognitive agent in a conventional system of classification or symbols which embodies how human beings accept and interpret the world. In this sense, convention plays a significant role in understanding the relationship between the representation-bearer and the representational object which the resemblance lacks, and that is why Goodman rejects the imitation theory by summarising: "resemblance in any degree is no sufficient condition for representation" (LA 4). For instance, neither the Duke of Wellington nor the Marlborough Castle could represent their depictions, though the portrait or the Constable painting of them can catch the likeness and represent in reverse order.

To Goodman, pictorial representation, is connected to a "conceptual framework" (Giovannelli) namely a symbol system, in which a piece of artwork can be understood and the viewer can get access to the visual world. In his review of Gombrich's *Art and Illusion* in the same year of the latter's publication, Goodman reaches an agreement with Gombrich on the rejection of the "innocent eye" by regarding perception as a human faculty that "depends heavily on conceptual schemata [and] the raw material of vision cannot be extracted from the finished product" (Review of *Art and Illusion* 596). Their idea of conventionalism attempts to attack the dominant myth of the "innocent eye" which presupposes that the human knowledge is a sensory process of receiving raw materials without prejudices, affections, or instrumental interests. Goodman criticises this naïve comprehension of human perception, and to him, the eye is rather capricious and complicated apparatus that "selects, rejects, organises, discriminates, associates, classifies, analyses, constructs" (LA 7-8). The copy theory of representation with this pair of innocent, mindless eye, is unable to explain what is actually being copied and thereby echoes the Kantian dictum "the innocent eye is blind and the virgin mind empty" (LA 8).

Goodman's representation theory in this Kantian tradition, implies that human perception depends upon a prior knowledge of convention, which is guided and constructed by the conceptual framework.

Compared to Goodman's system of symbolisation in the socio-cultural dimension, Gombrich's conventionalist theory is based on what he defines as "schema" (Bull 208), the cognitive presupposition of the world from a psychological point of view – also implied by his subtitle of *Art and Illusion*. They both repudiate the myth of "innocent eye" and then draw attention to the conventionality in the reception and interpretation between the image and the viewer. Even though Goodman and Gombrich are concerned about the representation processing between the artwork and the observer instead of the mimetic relationship between the work and the object in Platonic philosophy of art, they react quite differently: Goodman's visuals representing a symbol or a code in a conventional or symbolic system internalised by a socio-cultural entity, whereas Gombrich's schema theory working more like an active psychological process in human's cognition. As discussed above, Goodman's symbol system works as an extension of what have been achieved in the realm of structuralist linguistics (Giovannelli), but his general comprehension of symbols covers both linguistic and non-linguistic symbols, e.g. painting, music, dance, as well as architecture, in order to contribute to systematically knowing, understanding, and interpreting the entire world of human experience. The way to approach the pictorial or other kinds of representation in this sort requires the preliminary knowledge of the convention or the learning of the cultural context, so that the viewer can realise the reference system in Goodman's forms of denotation and exemplification (Giovannelli; Moriarty and Kenny 236).

Different from Goodman's position on art as language, Gombrich's theory of pictorial representation, more importantly, addresses the cognitively active processing between the representation-bearer and the representational object. Some critics point out the essence of Gombrich's theory, noticeably under the influence of Immanuel Kant and Ludwig Wittgenstein (Braembussche 22), is "his conception of the human being as an active agent in forming his or her experiences in the world" (Kim 36), and his idea of a ubiquitous schematic system expatiates on the psychological and perceptual involvement between the picture and the spectator. This schematic system not only embodies a Goodman's scheme of symbol in the power of cultures and traditions, but also constructs a system of transcendental knowledge in our mind to conceptualise the world that we have seen. It is a sense of inseparability between the shape and the interpenetration, as exemplified by Gombrich's duck-rabbit image: the eye is not innocent at all but an intellectual organism, and the viewer is always intellectually aware of the fact that we need "a vocabulary before [we] can embark on a 'copy' of reality" (*Art and Illusion* 71). Gombrich's "vocabulary" never means a conventional system of arbitrary relationships in terms of differentiation like Goodman's language of art, but rather a conceptual schema by which the spectator is able to approach or envision the real world. The psychological effects emphasised here appear as a "presence" (AI 90), a perceptual tendency and conceptual faculty in human nature. Hence, the relationship between the picture and the reality is not passive but active, within a cognitive instead of a cultural structure.

Gombrich's notion of representation is fundamentally grounded on the system of his schemata, which are prior concepts of the object provided by the psychological thinking of perception of human being (Bull 214). His schemata are a cluster of preconceptions, or "a mental set" (AI 50) in a post-Kantian period of aesthetics. He directly quotes Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* at the beginning of his chapter "Truth and the Stereotype" in *Art*

and Illusion: "The schematism by which our understanding deals with the phenomenal world [...] is a skill so deeply hidden in the human soul that we shall hardly guess the secret trick that Nature here employs" (qtd. in *AI* 52). As he discusses afterwards, his idea of schema is considered as "individual visual information [entered] upon a pre-existing blank or formulary" (*AI* 60) which, either conceptual or inscribed, consists in the psychological progress of recognition and production. In this way, how do Gombrich's schemata work to aid the representation to proceed and the image to come into being? According to Bull, the structure of pictorial representation is embedded in the complex interactions among three systems, *i.e.* (A) images related to objects, (B) schemata to objects, as well as (C) schemata to images:

On [Gombrich's] reading, the pictorial system (as opposed to the pictorial scheme) exists through the elision of the pictorial scheme with the schematic scheme in perception. When looking at the scheme of (A) we see the scheme of schemata and so create system (A) by imagining that we are in system (B). It is thus by experiencing images as schemata that the pictorial scheme becomes a system. (Bull 212)

To Gombrich's psychological approach, the pictorial representation is an intellectually active process between the object and the image, in the course of which the human mind functions as a cognitive agent of transforming, interpreting, and reproducing. His ingenious examples to substantiate this argument can be observed in his comparison between Duerer's woodcut rhinoceros and Heath's engraving *African Rhinoceros*, and another between different depictions of the natural scenery in Derwentwater by an anonymous British romantic in 1826 and Chinese painter Chiang Yee in 1936. Although both pairs of artists depicted the same representational objects, their representation-bearer, or specifically speaking, their paintings are quite distinctive in manner and style. Gombrich explains that it is because "[p]ainting is an activity, and the artist will therefore tend to see what he paints rather to paint what he sees" (*AI* 69). In this sense, all art is conventional and influenced by what Gombrich calls "beholder's share" (*AI* 176). This key term is equal to the conceptual schema in various forms of vocabulary, tradition, technique, style, etc. Gombrich's schema is to some extent related to Harold Bloom's canon or the anxiety of influence, a misprision of one's actual sources and cultural traditions: Bloom defines every poem as "a misinterpretation [misunderstanding, misalliance] of a parent poem" (1658-59), while Gombrich discovers the role of illusion in the artistic creation by claiming that "[w]hen we deal with masters of the past who were both great artists and great 'illusionists', the study of art and the study of illusion cannot always be kept apart" (*AI* 6). According to their psychoanalytic models, neither the verbal nor the visual representation can be virginal between the perceptible reality and the artistic product, but instead an aggressive and self-assertive challenge of the shared views.

A Debate on the Nature of the Convention

Goodman and Gombrich, in the similar manner of Bloom's manifesto for antithetical criticism in a Nietzschean destruction of the Platonic philosophical tradition, employ an unorthodox and groundbreaking approach and problematise the dominant prevalence of the mimetic theory in western culture derived from the 4th century B.C. in Greece and revived in the 15th century Italian Renaissance (Kim 35-36). They disrupt the traditional binary relationship of the pictorial representation between the picture and the object, and critically identify the inevitable and significant existence of the convention, either in

Goodman’s term “symbol” or Gombrich’s “conceptual schema”. The binary structure of mimetic view to understand the representation is based on the degree of likeness or resemblance between the artwork and the depicted, as an accurate, realistic depiction observed by the naked, innocent eye (see Fig. 1):



Figure 1. *Model of the Mimetic Theory of Representation*

Nevertheless, Goodman then declares that “[n]othing is seen nakedly or naked” (LA 8) in a consensus with Gombrich on the denial of the “innocent eye.” What they believe in the legitimate explanation of pictorial representation is the involvement of convention (see Fig. 2), which renders all representation “indirect, conditional and mediated” rather than “direct, unconditional and immediate” as a perfect copy of the external world (Braembussche 26):

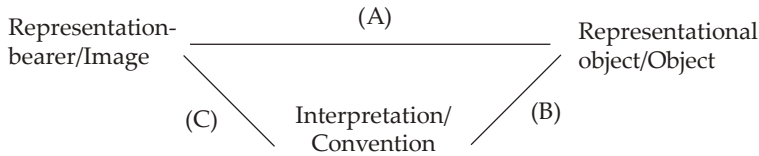


Figure 2. *Model of the Conventionalist Theory of Representation*

The main divergence here, between Goodman’s and Gombrich’s conventionalism, is different understanding on the nature of convention, namely what in fact forces the spectator to gain this automatic interpretation to comprehend and shape the world. To Goodman, he acknowledges that “the way we see and depict depends upon and varies with experience, practice, interests, and attitudes” (LA 10), and more precisely, his notion of convention such as “experience, practice, interests, and attitudes” is originated from a culture-bound system of symbols which should be understood in semantic and syntactic relationships in the same way to the language. Gombrich with other constructivist psychologists rather takes the transcendental knowledge and the acquaintance of socio-cultural codes or conventions for granted, and to a greater extent, he prioritises the subjectivity of human perception in a cognitive processing to know and construct the world, based on a very Kantian underpinning that human knowledge is a combination of the productivity of mind and the information receiving from the reality.

In this way, it is reasonable to argue that the relationship between Goodman’s and Gombrich’s conventionalist theories of representation is more a continuum than a deviation. According to the model of the processing continuum from Moriarty and Kenny (239), the philosophical idea of representation has experienced a development from natural perception as an essentialist view dependent on inborn sensory faculty, to the process of social or cultural conventions, and further to the cognitive activities based on intricate information processing and mental manipulation. The continuity here witnesses an increasingly self-conscious psychological involvement, turning out to be the main difference between Goodman’s and Gombrich’s systems. The most complex model thus should be the cognitive processing, which as formulated by Gombrich, is based on the “interplay of perceptual and conventional activities” (Moriarty and Kenny 240), a synthesis of the experiential knowledge of arbitrary symbols in cultural dimension and the inherent learning of cognition in human mind.

The Limitation of the Conventionalist View

Nelson Goodman from his purely conventionalist or relativist view of representation, succeeds in meeting his target at constructing a general grammar of system of symbols; nonetheless, it is noteworthy to be on alert for his technical approach to functions and relationships of sign. His structural linguistic analysis tends to be on the edge of a sort of "linguistic imperialism" (Mitchell 56) which follows the Barthesian predominance of linguistics over semiology – the general study of signs, by eliminating the primary difference even between a picture and a map due to the reason that the "relation between a picture and what it represents is thus assimilated to the relation between a predicate and what it applies" (LA 5). Goodman then fails to differentiate the pictorial representation from other symbol systems, even though he tries to use a "replete"/"undifferentiated" structure for depiction to differ from a "disjoint"/"differentiated" (LA 148-54; 225-32) one for description. What he responds to this problem is still grounded on his functionalist and formalist way of thinking representation, neglecting any historical significance or aesthetic judgement. Another more important account for Goodman called by Gombrich as an "extreme conventionalis[t]" ("Image and Code" 14) must be his lack of perceptual or psychological processing in his system, which is dependent on habits, conventions, rules, and socio-cultural codes without an obvious cognitive efficacy. For these reasons it is possible to predicate severe objections open to Goodman's theoretical limits, in addition to his self-repudiation of "questions of value [and] canons of criticism" (LA xi):

He professes no interest in the history of any of the arts, or even of the philosophical inquiry he is pursuing. He has little to say about certain time-honoured topics such as censorship, the moral or didactic functions of art, the issues of politics and ideology that enter inevitably into the making and using of art. He doesn't question, most fundamentally, the historicity of the concept of art itself, and seems to proceed on the assumption that this is simply a universal category that can be described from a neutral, analytic perspective. (Mitchell 71)

Goodman's work in the manner of analytic philosophy and value-free science, also can be seen in his version of realism. Different from Lukács with his Marxist treatment of realism as the authentic literature of its period whose essential mission is to "seek out the lasting features in people, in their relations with each other and in the situations in which they have to act [and] focus on those elements which endure over long periods and which constitutes the objective human tendencies of society and indeed of mankind as a whole" (47), Goodman on the other hand, treats it merely as a matter of habit, familiarity, and convention. His notion of realism cannot ask major realists to care about the "progressive development of the masses' own experiences" (Lukács 57) in a dialectical view of history between evolution and revolution, for his ahistorical sense of realism is "relative, determined by the system of representation standard for a given culture or person at a given time" (LA 37). Rather than penetrating the underlying network of the society and human life, Goodman considers realism to be a stereotyped or standardised style that has been commonly accepted. Realism, at this point fails to be an ideological reflection on the moral, cultural, and historical values of the society, and simply become a "matter of habit", a "plan of correlation" (LA 38).

As Goodman confesses that *conventional* is a "tricky term" (Review of "Perspective as a Convention" 86) and he himself tries to avoid using it in late works like *Ways of Worldmaking*, Gombrich similarly exhibits an indeterminate attitude toward the distinction between nature and convention. The nature-convention opposition can date back to the very origin of western philosophy in Plato's *Cratylus* as a universal commonplace to

separate the mimetic theory of representation from the conventionalist view. Based on this binary opposition, more and more conventionalists tend to deem the pictorial representation as the prior knowledge acquired from socio-cultural rules and conventions. Gombrich finds himself at times as an "arch-conventionalist" (Mitchell 77) who argues for that "the study of art will be increasingly supplemented by inquiry into the linguistics of the visual image" (AI 9), approving of a linguistic model to understand the representation like Goodman. Nevertheless, as later criticising Goodman's extreme conventionalism, Gombrich realises that conventionalist point of view based on nature-convention distinction "has led to certain difficulties" since "this distinction is unreal" (AI 87). More radically, he undermines this traditional binary in his critique of the scope and limits of conventionalism, where he recognises that "the traditional opposition between 'nature' and 'convention' turns out to be misleading [and] what we observe is rather a continuum between skills which come naturally to us and others which may be next to impossible for anyone to acquire" ("Image and Code" 16-17). The limitation of conventionalism here is the clash established between nature and convention, and to Gombrich, the only difference between natural perception and conventional knowledge is the degree of difficulties that human needs to learn how to use the sign.

The touchstone of the conventionalism as the boundary between nature and convention thus eventually collapses, and Gombrich asserts that the pictorial representation should be deemed as a continuum instead of a confrontation – as Moriarty and Kenny's continual processing model reveals – which produces a combined knowledge of natural perception of what we simply see, together with a more complicated and dynamic processing of conventional codes in our mind. However, it is also supposed to beware of Gombrich's reconciliation, to a certain degree, as an ambiguous strategy of his uncertain, paradoxical thinking about the conventionality and the naturalness of pictorial representation. In *Art and Illusion*, he views the image as a conventional sign, since the comprehension of the representation-bearer, or the work of art requires a transcendental knowledge learned by specific techniques and skills, whereas in "Image and Code" he questions the reliability of convention and emphasises the naturalness of art, for the reason that when seeing the famous mosaic "Beware of the Dog" in Pompeii "we do not have to acquire knowledge about teeth and claws in the same way in which we learn a language" (20). He is likely to base this idea of image as a natural sign, pointed out by Mitchell, on the "*consumption* rather than the *production*" (85), not on the relationship between the artist and the artwork, but between that and the viewer. In spite of his indeterminacy between the nature and the convention, Gombrich's theory of representation, to a broad sense, apprehends the limits of Goodman's radical conventionalism and tries to overcome it with a psychologically active processing in association with both sensory equipment and cultural tradition.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Goodman and Gombrich represent two similar but distinctive responses to the conventionalist theory of pictorial representation based on commonly acquired knowledge, in opposition to Plato's mimetic theory dependent on resemblance or likeness by the empirical perception on the external world. The contemporary perspectives thus have experienced a shift from defining representation as something appearing between the object and the artwork, to a conventional or cognitive processing between the artwork and the observer. Against the presence of the "innocent eye", the conventionality of the representation here, as I have analysed above, should be understood into two different directions. Goodman's convention is a pre-existing grammatical or linguistic system of

symbols, functioning as Saussurean signification in an arbitrary relationship between the represented/signified and the representing work/signifying. In contrast to Goodman's passivity of knowing, Gombrich regards this sort of convention as psychological effects of the work upon the spectators in the course of reception, which can by no means avoid the subjective judgement and interpretation. More importantly, despite the fact that their theories stand for a turning point in the aesthetic discussion of the western aesthetic philosophy in the twentieth century, the limitation of their conventionalist point of view cannot be easily ignored: (1) Goodman's extreme conventionalism in a formalist method with few interests in content, value, historicity, and ideology, which shows a noticeable disparity between his treatment of realism and that of Marxist aesthetics; (2) Gombrich's inconsistent arguments from a conventionalist position then to a revised stance in which he argues for a cognitively active processing as a continuum of both natural perception and socio-cultural convention. In a word, this essay by means of contrast and comparison, has critically investigated values and limits of the conventionalism that will be helpful to the contemporary literary and aesthetic discussion on the concept of representation in a new epoch of intellectual history.

Trinity College Dublin, Ireland

Works Cited

- Bloom, Harold. *The Anxiety of Influence*. Leitch et al., pp. 1651-59.
- Braembussche, Antoon Van den. "The Imitation Theory." *Thinking Art: An Introduction to Philosophy of Art*. Springer, 2009, pp. 15-35.
- Bull, Malcolm. "Scheming Schemata." *British Journal of Aesthetics*, vol. 34, no. 3, 1994, pp. 207-17.
- Files, Craig. "Goodman's Rejection of Resemblance." *British Journal of Aesthetics*, vol. 36, no. 4, 1996, pp. 398-412.
- Giovannelli, Alessandro. "Goodman's Aesthetics." *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta et al., 2017, plato.stanford.edu/entries/goodman-aesthetics/. Accessed 28 Sept. 2020.
- Gombrich, E.H. "Image and Code: Scope and Limits of Conventionalism in Pictorial Representation." *Image and Code*, edited by Wendy Steiner, 1981, The University of Michigan Press, pp. 173-94.
- . *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation*. Phaidon, 1987.
- Goodman, Nelson. Review of *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation*, by E.H. Gombrich. *The Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 57, no. 18, 1960, pp. 595-99.
- . *Language of Art: An Approach to a Theory of Symbols*. Hackett Pub. Co., 1976.
- . Review of "Perspective as a Convention: On the Views of Goodman and Gombrich," by David Carrier. *Leonardo*, vol. 14, no. 1, 1981, pp. 86.
- Hyman, John, and Katerina Bantinaki. "Depiction." *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta et al., 2017, plato.stanford.edu/entries/depiction/. Accessed 28 Sept. 2020.
- Kim, Nanyoung. "Ernst H. Gombrich, Pictorial Representation, and Some Issues in Art Education." *The Journal of Aesthetic Education*, vol. 38, no. 4, 2004, pp. 32-45.
- Leitch, Vincent B., et al., editors. *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*. 2nd ed., W.W. Norton, 2010.
- Lukács, Georg. "Realism in the Balance." *Aesthetics and Politics*, edited by Ronald Taylor, 1980, Verso, pp. 28-59.
- Mitchell, W.J.T. *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology*. The University of Chicago Press, 1987.
- Moriarty, Sandra E., and Keith Kenny. "A Philosophical Discussion of Representation." *VisualQuest: Journeys toward Visual Literacy*, edited by Robert E. Griffin et al., International Visual Literacy Association, 1997, pp. 235-42.
- Plato. *Republic*. Leitch et al., pp. 45-77.
- Wollheim, Richard. *The Mind and Its Depths*. Harvard University Press, 1993.

The Present-Day Medusa: Foregrounding L'écriture Feminism in the Contemporary Retellings of Mythology

MUSKAAN KAPOOR

Abstract

The myth of Medusa as the petrifying woman, a monster, who is herself decapitated for her beauty and her powers to transfix has been circulated widely in western mythology and culture. She has been allegorized as the figure of supreme feminine beauty, sexual desire, of rebellion, punishment and inflicted terror. *Helene Cixous* in her essay, "The Laugh of the Medusa" uses the myth of Medusa and counteracts the millennia of misogynist depiction of women and their sexuality. In fact, it was mainly in this essay that *Cixous* introduced the concept of L'écriture feminine writing, which concentrates on the representation of the feminine body and questions the male oriented thought process which suppresses female voice. It is one of the most influential theoretical constructs for women writing in the contemporary times, using which *Cixous* criticizes *Freud's* understanding of female sexuality as a lack and *Lacan's* idea of phallus being the ultimate signifier of authority and control.

Women, often believed to be "the other" gender has always been understood and explained in terms of binary opposites, as whatever the man is the woman is not. In this process of othering, myths are often used as the most powerful tools by patriarchy to subordinate women. Many writers depend upon the ancient myths to negotiate such patriarchal ideologies. As a result, women in literature, especially in mythologies are either silent or have been largely misrepresented and portrayed negatively. The lack of male characteristics and qualities make women inferior, according to the general patriarchal beliefs but with the support and encouragement of various feminist movements, many writers have made attempts to rewrite and reinterpret these myths. Such attempts challenge the prevailing ambivalent or stereotypical representation of women by fostering a feminist ideology that rejects patriarchal bias.

Throughout history, women have been excluded from any kind of writing that could allow them to contribute in the making of history and culture. Being considered less intellectual, women have been, over centuries tamed to be silent, especially when it comes to expressing their needs in the dominant world of men. Therefore, one of the major concerns of the feminist theory was the way, women's ability to speak gets silenced, both in relation to sexist situations and to the way in which discourse itself is constructed. Indeed, there has been a systematic deprivation of women; not only in life but also equally in language and literature. Thus, in the light of efforts made by *Helene Cixous* and other feminists, the paper highlights the phenomenon of increased production of retellings of the ancient myths, which provides new representation of female subjectivities that break the stereotypical thought process and emphasize autonomy. It attempts to answer how

the present is shaped by the competing past and in doing so, it not only remakes the present but also creates a new past. The paper offers a textual analysis of the novels, "The Penelopiad" by *Margaret Atwood* and "Girl meets boy" by *Ali Smith*, explaining as to how the aforementioned works attempt to break the clutches of traditional orthodox and rewrite female experiences through a new version of myths but somehow end up consciously or unconsciously following the same heteronormative hierarchies.

Keywords: Myths, L'écriture feminism, revisionist feminist fiction, female sexuality.

There is a voice crying in the wilderness, *Catherine Clement* and *Helene Cixous* say— the voice of a body, dancing, laughing, shrieking, crying. Whose is it? It is, they say, the voice of a women, newborn and yet archaic, a voice of milk and blood, a voice silenced but savage. (Gilbert, 1)

Literature from time immemorial has represented women in a silhouette of gender stereotype, be it in poetry, fiction, prose or in the genre of mythology. The forms of gender discrimination have been almost universal and women have been a silent population throughout the world. Men have always been projected as productive, intellectual, rational, whereas women were relegated to a position of second-class citizen. The human civilization has been strongly influenced and dominated by patriarchal thinking but at the same time, there have been women fighting to free themselves from the clutches of suffocating male oppression. The lack of male characteristics and qualities make women inferior, according to the general patriarchal beliefs but with the support and encouragement of various Feminist movements, socio-political structures and institutions, the reinforcement of gender equality was initiated. Such attempts challenge the prevailing ambivalent or stereotypical representation of women by fostering a feminist ideology that rejects patriarchal bias.

Although, women in literature, especially in mythologies are either silent or have been largely misrepresented and portrayed negatively to negotiate the patriarchal ideologies but the prolific works of various feminists encouraged and defended the political, economic, social and personal rights of women. Therefore, one of the major concerns of the feminist theory was the way, women's ability to speak gets silenced, both in relation to sexist situations and the way in which discourse itself is constructed. Indeed, there has been a systematic deprivation of women; not only in life but also equally in language and literature. Thus, while the various powerful waves of feminism championed the cause of women by condemning gender difference and advocating equality in the so called 'men's world', some post structuralist feminist like *Helen Cixous*, *Luce Irigaray* and *Judith Butler* concerned themselves with the elaboration and deconstruction of gender difference in particularly language. They assumed that the inequalities that exist between man and women are not natural, but rather a social construct. It is preordained and is created by men to retain their authority on women. The problem, however increased when various male writers started generalizing these particular attributes, which they associated with women. Even to the extent of portraying these inferior characteristics in various literary works, novels and other media sources. This further led to the construction of a particular image of the so called 'ideal women' and fused a bias in the mind and attitude of the human society. Thus, the main focus of these feminists was to refashion the language and myths which assert women as inferior and humiliate their existence. This effort is a method, employed by them to claim the male space for women.

The works based on mythology has continued to influence and fascinate people from antiquity to the present day. Myths have been considered traditional sacred narratives that intend to explain the relationship between the entire universe and the human experience. A single explanation of myth is never adequate as its definitions vary significantly. On one hand, myths are sacred or symbolic stories and on the other hand, they are stories which misrepresent or are fictitious. But in both the cases, myths influence the human life. It includes certain narratives which human mind takes to be crucial to their understanding of the world, as it ostensibly relates events in the form of stories to propagate certain practices, beliefs, rituals and other phenomenon. Often myths are constructed, sanctified and circulated for legitimizing certain orthodox views and practices. They become a means to naturalize particular world views, even if that harms the society and promote gender discrimination. Indeed, myths are important part of human civilization, as one feels culturally impoverished without them but the need for myths is as real for women as it is for men. Yet the situation is asymmetrical because it seems that while men have myths on their side, women have myths against them. Therefore, such gender prejudice can be easily traced in almost all the tales of mythology, for instance the famous myth of Medusa.

The myth of Medusa as the lapidifying woman, a monster, who gets beheaded for her beauty and her powers to transfix has been circulated widely in western mythology and culture. She has been allegorized as a figure of supreme feminine beauty, of sexual desire and inflicted terror. *Helene Cixous* in her essay, "The Laugh of the Medusa" uses the myth of Medusa and counteracts the millennia of misogynist depiction of women and their sexuality. She contradicts Freud's recourse to the myth as "a symbol of terror and unintelligible feminine sexuality". She rather presents her feminist critique through the figure of a laughing Medusa, an effort to turn the myth of Medusa, the allegedly castrating and decapitated women into a living Medusa, who mocks at this mythology and explores femininity and her sexuality, outside the patriarchal registers and against the age-old misogyny. Thus, her essay specifically refers and counter attacks *Sigmund Freud*, reference to Medusa and the theory of feminine sexuality that his psychoanalysis as well as *Lacan*, following *Freud* had suggested.

Cixous interprets Medusa's death as a masculine attempt to silence the voice and end the language of women. She attempts to deconstruct *Freud's* theory of the "Castration Complex" in men during the Oedipal stage of psychosexual development and *Lacanian* theory of Symbolic order in the development of language. *Sigmund Freud* in his short text "Medusa's Head" (1963) puts forth the idea that the decapitation of Medusa's head is a symbol that manifests the castration complex in males in the oedipal stage wherein realizing the absence of the penis or phallus in the mother, the male child inevitably identifies with the father and separates from his mother in the fear of castration. "To decapitate = to castrate" (1963, 202). The "terror of castration" occurs when "a boy, who has hitherto been unwilling to believe the threat of castration, catches sight of the female genitals, probably those of an adult, surrounded by hair, and essentially those of his mother" (202). The psychoanalyst *Lacan*, dwelling on *Freud's* theory exclaims that after the separation of child from his mother, he gets familiar with the patrilineal world, constructed by his father. This new world which is systematized by concrete rules and order is named as the 'symbolic order' by *Lacan*. His idea that the structure of language is centered by the Phallus and that language within the symbolic order is representational, where a single signifier is connected to a single signified is contested by *Cixous* as she

argues that the subject position of "woman" or the "feminine" is on the margins of the symbolic and thus it is less firmly anchored and controlled by the phallus.

In fact, it was mainly in this essay that *Cixous* introduced the concept of *L'écriture féminine* writing, which concentrates on the representation of the feminine body and questions the male oriented thought process which suppresses female voice. This phenomenal work highlights the importance of women as writers. According to *Cixous*, it is through the bodily experience that women can give birth to a powerful genre of writing such as *L'écriture féminine*, which subverts the phallogocentric discourse of masculine writing, along with the logocentric representational system through which it functions.

In the spirit of *L'écriture féminine*, various other writers, especially contemporary fiction writers are engrossed with the art of feminist revisionist myth fiction, which introduces the characteristics of modern-day medusa in each and every character. This phenomenon of reverberating mythical past has gained immense popularity, all across the globe. For instance, the "Canongate Myth series", which is an initiative taken by *Jamie Byng*, a Scottish publisher to collect short stories in which the ancient myths from myriad cultures is retold by contemporary writers. Thus, the genre of revisionist mythological fiction provides a platform to interrogate the cultural hierarchies and socio-moral conventions. Many prolific writers like *Margaret Atwood*, *Ali Smith*, *Jeanette Winterson* and others have contributed to the success of the Canongate series by producing million seller books like "The Penelopiad", "Girl meets Boy" and "Weight", respectively.

Atwood in her novella, "The Penelopiad" attempts to highlight and rewrite female experiences and their internal monologue through a revised version of the famous story of *Homer's Odyssey* and his wife *Penelope*. In the original text, the female characters such as *Penelope* and her twelve maids are portrayed as the silent victim of the patriarchal world but the character of *Atwood's Penelope* is essentially more than a mere faithful wife. She is witty, clever and a modern-day woman, who has her own individuality. *Atwood* in the very introduction of the novella makes clear her intentions to rewrite the tale of *Odyssey*. "The story as told in *The Odyssey* doesn't hold water: there are too many inconsistencies. I've always been haunted by the hanged maids; and, in *The Penelopiad*, so is *Penelope* herself" (*Atwood* introduction xxi). In the original text, the character of the maids is questioned, they are assumed to be treacherous but *The Penelopiad* provides us with the other side of the story. They are portrayed as innocent faithful maids, who were following the commands of their mistress, *Penelope*. They were asked to spy on the suitors by all means, even if they had to flirt or sleep with them, for the safety of *Penelope* and her son, *Telemachus*. "I told my twelve young maids – the loveliest, the most beguiling - to hang around the Suitors and spy on them, using whatever enticing arts they could invent. No one knew of my instructions but myself and the maids in question; I chose not to share the secret with *Eurykleia* – in hindsight, a grave mistake. This plan came to grief. Several of the girls were unfortunately raped, others were seduced, or were hard pressed and decided that it was better to give in than to resist" (*Atwood* 115). Although later in the novella, *Penelope* does mention that the maids were not entirely faithful as some of them did actually fall in love with the suitors but still this is the only version of the tale, where the loyalty of the maids is presented. The reason of their unfortunate death is due to the miscommunication and not the treachery of the maids.

Homer's "The Odyssey" revolves around the achievements and struggles of the hero of the novel, *Odysseus* but *Atwood's* work attempts to present a facet of female existence in the patriarchal world. She gives importance to the so called less important characters of

the story, who obviously happens to be the women. She successfully depicts the life journey of Penelope, who struggles from the very day; she enters the world as she was always deprived of parental affection. "When I was quite young my father ordered me to be thrown into the sea I never knew exactly why, during my life time, but now I suspect he'd been told by an oracle that I would weave his shroud. Possibly he thought that if he killed me first, his shroud would never be woven and he would live forever." (Atwood 7) Penelope's childhood taught her to be self-reliant, strong and independent. Also, her marriage was not based on love but on a property agreement between her father and her would be husband, Odysseus. "And so, I was handed over to Odysseus, like a package of meat", says Penelope when describing her marriage to Odysseus (Atwood 39).

Penelope knew it very well that no matter how clever she is, she will always be treated as inferior to her husband. "I was clever, everyone said so – in fact they said it so much that I found it discouraging – but cleverness is a quality a man likes to have in his wife as long as she is some distance away from him" (Atwood 29). Penelope was able to showcase her intellect, strength and skills, only after her husband left for the Trojan wars. It is remarkable, the way she uses her wit to trick the suitors and is able to delay their advances towards her for years, as she cannot possibly stop them with her physical strength. "She must complete a woven shroud for her father-in-law before she can choose a new husband. She works on it all day and then at night she would undo her progress" (Atwood 112). Also, she was witty enough to persuade her maids to spy on the suitors for their motives and plans, as aforementioned in the paper.

Thus, in *Homer's* *Odyssey*, her life background and perspective on her husband's time away is not shared. She is just portrayed as a devoted wife, who awaits for her husband's return, like a minor flat character but *Atwood's* Penelope is much stronger and wiser, who does not spend twenty long years, crying and awaiting for her husband's return but acts according to the situation and keeps away the suitors from fulfilling their treacherous intentions. Her improvised character indeed resonates with *Cixious's* modern day medusa. Penelope's side of the story makes clear that she is well aware of the artificial construction of female myths by the patriarchy. She even exclaims this in the beginning of the novella, "How they were turning me into a story, or into several stories, though not the kind of stories I'd prefer to hear about myself. What can a woman do when scandalous gossip travels the world? If she defends herself, she sounds guilty. So, I waited some more. (Atwood 3) Thus, Atwood not only, successfully weaves the revised tale of Penelope but also concentrates on the art of narration and introduces a new, alternative tradition of women writing.

Similarly, *Ali Smith* rejiggers *Ovid's*, mythological tale of Iphis and Ianthe from *Metamorphoses* in her novel, "Girl meets boy". She attempts to reframe *Ovid's* description and perception of classical myths for the twentieth century readers by developing a new, liberating queer feminist model. In the ancient classical period, the word "queer" was used as an insult, as it was generally considered a colloquial term for homosexuals, which was embedded by a strong homophobic significance but with changed times, the meaning of queer changed as it lost its negative connotation. It not only referred to people, who were attracted to others of the same sex but also talked about their sexuality, bodies that did not conform with the societal dominant norms. It turned into a movement of struggle against the dominant heterosexual culture, which gave voice to those marginalized sexualities that could not fit into the traditional discourse of gender and sexuality. There are hardly any classical tales that projects homosexuality in a positive light, even *Ovid's*

mythological tale of Iphis and Ianthe, accepts the homosexual relationship only when Iphis is turned into a boy by goddess Isis. Smith through her version of the classical myth attacks this stereotypical notion and presents a beautiful love story of two girls.

She uses her writing as a tool to project a new, liberated thinking, which changes people's perception of gender and equality. Her work, "Girl meets boy" creates a fictional space, which allows refreshing the ancient Ovidian theme of metamorphoses in contemporary context. Smith mainly focuses on the metamorphoses of the characters, describing their desires, the fluidity of their identities, according to their sexual preferences and societal norms. She uses water as a metaphor to express this fluidity of identities, which gradually broadens the mindset of the characters. It is precisely through the notion of fluidity that queer theory formulates a new understanding of gender identity by rejecting the binaries between men and women. The novel is divided into five parts and revolves around the life of two sisters, namely Imogen and Anthea, who live together in the city of Inverness in Scotland. Both the sisters' work in a company called Pure, which manufactures bottled water. Anthea, unlike her sister does not like her job as she despises the company's strategy of marketing and fooling innocent people. Another boyish looking girl, named Robin, who is a graffiti artist, is introduced later in the novel, with whom Imogen gets romantically involved and the love story of girl meets boyish girl evolves.

The theme of *Ovid's* metamorphoses is highlighted in the novel, when Anthea sees Robin for the first time. "My head, something happened to its insides. It was as if a storm at sea happened, but only for a moment, and only on the inside of my head. My ribcage, something definitely happened there. It was as if it unknotted itself from itself, like the hull of a ship hitting rock, giving way, and the ship that I was opened wide inside me and in came the ocean. He was the most beautiful boy I had ever seen in my life. But he looked really like a girl. She was the most beautiful boy I had ever seen in my life" (*Smith* 44-45). Anthea, considered by her sister to be straight until now, falls in love.

She finds it difficult to begin to accept that her sister is 'One of Them' (*Smith* 55). Apart from her some other characters in the novel, for instance, Dominic and Norman, her co-workers at Pure, also show their dislike towards homosexuality and discuss lesbianism in terms of 'marked underdevelopment' (*Smith* 69). Initially it becomes really difficult for Imogen to make peace with the fact that her sister is not "straight" and is interested in the same sex. She looks for categories to place her sister's sexuality. "what's the correct word for it, I mean, for you?", Robin replies simply, "The proper word for me ... is me" (*Smith* 76).

Smith highlights such taboo of constructed societal binaries, where it is essential for everyone to fit in the category of either "straight-normal" or "gay-abnormal". Her understanding of gender is inspired from the prominent work, "Gender trouble" by *Judith Butler*, which highlights the instability and fluidity of gender categories. *Butler* asserts that such categorization of gender should be discarded. She supports her argument with the theory of *Michel Foucault* and affirms that humans are social products, controlled by societal norms and various power structures.

Smith projects the need for the society to accept and respect every kind of relationship in its true sense, through her writing. It should not be like the myth of Iphis and Ianthe, where Iphis had to transform her body to make things work. "Old stories repeat themselves, but always to new ends and always to this end: a renewal of vision" (*Smith* 38). She clearly asserts through her writing that her purpose of reworking on the ancient tale in the contemporary times was to force the readers to consider a different point of view in the story. She transposes the ancient tale to the present time and depicts that love

cannot be caged in any category and same sex relations can be successful without the transformation of one of the partners into the opposite sex. Thus, *Smith's* retelling is a story of love and fluidity of identities. She challenges the myth of fitting into societal categories and creates an uplifting story about the importance of accepting oneself and others.

However, the purpose of my paper is not just to highlight the techniques and methods employed by the aforementioned contemporary writers to provide an equal space in the misogynist world but also to question whether the efforts put forth by these writers are sufficient to find solution for the so called "Gender trouble" in our society? Are they really successful in doing justice to their claim of providing freedom to the believed oppressed characters in various ancient mythological characters? Indeed, to some extent their respective works do contribute to the making of an independent, modern and assertive individual, be it man or woman, homosexual or heterosexual. Their efforts do contribute significantly in the trend of retelling of mythology, which inspire a lot many people to understand the importance of individual rights and equality but somehow, I feel their methods are not completely successful in deconstructing the performance of normative gender roles.

For instance, *Atwood's* novella, "The Penelopiad", is believed to be the revised version of the *Odysseys* tale, written from a feminist perspective but still it consciously or unconsciously leads to the social construction of gender. Women from their birth are trained and taught to become faithful, successful wives or mothers and men being the so called 'most important gender' for the society are trained for other important political, social, economic works. Marriage for them is not even a concern; it is solely for the purpose of their entertainment, pleasure and birth of their heirs.

Atwood's characters unravel the myth of defloration, by their gendered performance. According to the defloration belief and as mentioned in the novella, "the bride had been stolen and the consummation of marriage was supposed to be a sanctioned rape.... A conquest, trampling of foe, a mock killing". (*Atwood* 44) *Atwood* presents the myth as an act of play, where *Odysseus* tells *Penelope*, "forget everything you've been told", he whispered, "I'm not going to hurt you, or not very much. But it would help us both, if you pretend. I've been told you are a clever girl. Do you think we can manage a few screams?" (*Atwood* 44). *Penelope* performs her femininity "in ways that were suitable for the wedding night" (*Atwood* 48). In order to please him she even behaves in a "winsome and flirtatious manner". (*Atwood* 58) But why is there even a need for *Penelope* to pretend or perform her gender? She forgets her own individuality in the process of maintaining the myth and masculinity of her husband. She does not contest against the ritual of making her a toy, objectification of her sexuality but chooses to ignore it and *Atwood* in order to project her efforts in revising the old myth, tries to cover this evil by the caring pretentious performance of *Odysseus*, who does not want to hurt his wife but also does not have the courage to voice out against the wrong. Also, why it is only the duty of *Penelope* or any other women to be faithful towards their partners and not expect the same faithfulness in return. The society and its norms would have definitely questioned the character of *Penelope*, if she would have agreed to get involved physically with any one of the suitors but nobody questions the mighty *Odysseus*, when he sleeps around with several Goddess and whores. His actions are considered to be part of normative masculine trait.

Atwood uses satire as her armor to hide *Penelope's* concern for her beauty and her jealousy towards her cousin, the beautiful *Helen*. In fact, the entire discourse of beauty is itself sexist in the sense that women are supposed to become the perfect Barbie to gain importance

and attention of the world. Also, from the very beginning of her novella, *Atwood* seems to be troubled by the killings of the maids in the original work but she does not provide any reasonable answer to those killings in her work as well. The character of Penelope as the courageous women did not voice out against the injustice done to her maids.

Although, *Atwood* in her novella attempts to depict Penelope as an, intelligent, strong women but still her efforts to manage her husband's estate on the island of Ithaca for twenty years, single handed are not appreciated, the way it should have been. Her cleverness to keep the suitors away from her estate is not discussed much but rather her cries and feeble nature, waiting for her husband to end the chaos is highlighted. Even after enduring so much trouble, at the end her faithfulness is questioned but what about the faithfulness of Odysseus, to whom the society provides all the rights to cheat his wife and share the bed with other Goddesses and whores.

Also, Ali Smith's work, "Girl meets boy" claims to depict the fluidity of gender, which cannot be controlled or caged but does she really provide that much of freedom to her characters to choose their own gendered identities? In fact, the title of the novella, itself contributes in establishing the normality of heterosexual relationships and the abnormality of homosexuality; it reads as "Girl meets boy" and not "Girl meets Girl". Although she asserts that her work is a tale of love and transformation, revelations, story of girls and boys, girls and girls, an attempt which hints towards the freedom of gender preference and beauty of homosexual relationships but by providing masculine characteristics to Robin, she herself restricts that freedom of love and gender preference. Her work is believed to be a revised version of *Ovid's* myth of Iphis and Ianthe and the very need for this revision was because both these female characters were not given the freedom to choose their sexual preference. In order to stay together, Iphis had to transform into a man but *Smith's* rewriting is no different from the ancient tale. Although, her characters, Imogen and Robin does not undergo any transformation but still she attributes masculine characteristics to Robin for their relationship to work. But why is there even a need for one of the homosexual partners to behave or act like the opposite sex? Why can't two girls or two boys be happy together, having the same personality?

Thus, there is no doubt that the revisions of ancient myths by various contemporary writers have contributed a lot to liberate the characters from the limitations of imposed identities, as witnessed in the ancient myth world. The characters, that were represented as oppressed and marginalized in the past are empowered and fore grounded in the postmodern world.

Adrienne Rich mentions in her famous essay, "When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Revision" that, "re-vision is an act of survival, consisting of looking back, seeing with fresh eyes, entering an old text from a new critical direction", in agreement to her statement, I believe that surely there is yet a lot to be explored, analyzed and contemplated in the retellings as well. The aforementioned and discussed works of *Margaret Atwood* and *Ali Smith* reconstruct the classical myth and attempts to invalidate the false knowledge of the past to the best of their abilities. Such revised works employ the technique of *L'écriture* feminine writing to deconstruct gender roles and provide voice to the suppressed but there is always a room for further analyses and further revisions to offer different suitable versions of the events and the characters.

Works Cited

- Atwood, Margaret, *The Penelopiad* (Toronto: Alfred A. Knopf Canada, 2005).
- Bray, Abigail. 2004. Helen Cixous, Writing and Sexual Difference. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1999. Print.
- Cixous, Helene. "The Laugh of the Medusa." *Signs*. Vol.1; no.4 (1976) 875-893.
- Cixous, Helene. "Castration or Decapitation?." *Signs*, vol. 7; no.1 (1981) 41-55.
- Cixous, Helene. 2001. *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*. Ed. Vincent B. Leitch. New York: London: W.W Norton & Company.
- Conley, Andermatt Verena. 1984. *Helene Cixous, Writing the feminine*. London: University of Nebraska Press.
- Gilbert, Sandra. "Introduction: A Tarentella of Theory". Helene Cixous and Catherine Clement. "The Newly born Woman". Trans. Betsy Wing (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001).
- Homer. *The Odyssey*. Trans. Theodore A. Buckley, Cosimo Classics, 2007.
- Lacan, Jacques. "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience." *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*. Ed. Vincent B. Leitch et al. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001. 1285-90
- Lefkowitz, Mary R. "Women in Greek Myth". *The American Scholar*, vol. 54 (1985): pp. 207-219.
- Smith Ali, "Girl meets boy". Paperback. Penguin Random House, 2007.

What Does It All Mean?

An Approach to Aesthetics of Ancient Chinese Poetry

WANG CHUTONG

Abstract

In this essay, I will compare different translations of ancient Chinese poetry by Stephen Owen and Xu Yuanchong. I will refer to *Book of Poetry* and poems from Tang and Song dynasties as examples. I argue, different translation versions represent different comprehensions of themes or aesthetics; and understanding artistic techniques of ancient Chinese poetry should be one of translation strategies.

Keywords: ancient Chinese poetry, translation, theme, aesthetics, artistic technique

Different Comprehensions of Themes

Many ancient Chinese poems are ambiguous in themes. Different translations may represent different interpretations of their themes. In this part, I will focus on one poem in *Book of Poetry* (*Shi Jing* 诗经) entitled *Bei Feng* (北风). In Stephen Owen's version, the title is translated as "North Wind," while in Xu Yuanchong(许渊冲)'s version, "The Hard Pressed."

"North Wind"

Chilly is the north wind,
heavy falls the snow;
if you care and love me,
take my hand, we'll go.
Don't be shy, don't be slow-
we must leave now!

Icy is the north wind,
thickly falls the snow;
if you care and love me,
take my hand, come away.
Don't be shy, don't be slow-
we must leave now!

No red but the fox,
no black but the crow;
if you care and love me,
take my hand, share my cart.
Don't be shy, don't be slow-
we must leave now!
(Owen 1996, p. 35)

"The Hard Pressed"

The cold north wind does blow.
And thick does fall the snow.
To all my friends I say:
"Hand in hand let us go!
There's no time for delay,
We must hasten our way."

The sharp north wind does blow
And heavy falls the snow.
To all my friends I say
"Hand in hand let's all go!
There's no time for delay;
We must hasten our way."

Red-handed foxes glow;
Their hearts are black as crow.
To all my friends I say
"In my cart let us go!
There's no time for delay;
We must hasten our way."
(Yan 2020, p. 66)

《北风》

北风其凉，雨雪其雱。
惠而好我，携手同行。
其虚其邪？既亟只且！

北风其喑，雨雪其霏。
惠而好我，携手同归。
其虚其邪？既亟只且！

莫赤匪狐，莫黑匪乌。
惠而好我，携手同车。
其虚其邪？既亟只且。

Stephen Owen may understand the theme of this poem as love and elopement. A modern Chinese poet and scholar, Wen Yiduo (闻一多) shares this understanding. Under this theme, a maid is persuading her lover to run with her. She expresses her eager desire that her lover should take her hand, share her cart and delay no more. She is full of self-consciousness and female subjectivity just like Ellen Olenska in Edith Wharton's *The Age of Innocence* or Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*. This theme may also lead readers to think about parental pressures on lovers, which have been frequently discussed in Shakespeare's works, for instance, Egeus's pressures on Hermia in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, or Romeo and Juliet as star-crossed lovers due to family relations. Owen may also understand the theme as marriage: a youth wants to take his beloved girl home, and he tells her not to be shy and hesitant. Xu Yuanchong understands the theme differently. He depicts the poem as hard-pressed people's dissatisfaction with tyrannical rules. They can bear political pressure no more and decide to run away together. Zheng Xuan(郑玄), a prominent East Han scholar specializing in ancient Chinese classics shares Xu's understanding of the theme. I argue, there could be different entryways to this poem and all interpretations will help it travel far. Different translations show different comprehensions of its theme, and a comparative reading of

different translation versions will help us see the original poem from different perspectives. Furthermore, every reading is already a translation.

Different Comprehensions of Aesthetics

In this part, I will focus on Owen's and Xu's different translations of a famous Tang dynasty poet Li Bai(李白)'s *Yue Xia Du Zhuo*(月下独酌). They understand and depict moonlight in this poem differently, which I believe represent different aesthetics.

"Drinking Alone by Moonlight"
(Translated by Stephen Owen)

Here among flowers one flask of wine,
with no close friends, I pour it alone.
I lift cup to bright moon, beg its company,
then facing my shadow, we become three.
The moon has never known how to drink;
my shadow does nothing but follow me.
But with moon and shadow as companions the while,
this joy I find must catch spring while it's here.
I sing, and the moon just lingers on;
I dance, and my shadow flails wildly.
When still sober we share friendship and pleasure,
then, utterly drunk, each goes his own way
Let us join to roam beyond human cares
and plan to meet far in the river of stars.
(Owen 1996, p. 403)

"Drinking Alone under the Moon"
(Translated by Xu Yuanchong)

Among the flowers, from a pot of wine
I drink without a companion of mine.
I raise my cup to invite the moon who blends
Her light with my Shadow and we're three friends.
The Moon does not know how to drink her share;
In vain my Shadow follows me here and there.
Together with them for the time I stay,
And make merry before spring's spent away.
I sing and the moon lingers to hear my song;
My shadow's a mess while I dance along.
Sober, we three remain cheerful and gay;
Drunken, we part and each may go his way.
Our friendship will outshine our earthly love;
Next time we'll meet beyond the stars above.
(Xu 2006, *300 Tang Poems*, p. 355)

《月下独酌》

花间一壶酒，独酌无相亲。
举杯邀明月，对影成三人。
月既不解饮，影徒随我身。

暂伴月将影，行乐须及春。
我歌月徘徊，我舞影零乱。
醒时同交欢，醉后各分散。
永结无情游，相期邈云汉。

In Owen's version, the poet begs for the moon's company. The moon, the shadow, and the poet gather randomly as three embodiments of solitude—loneliness has not been alleviated, even strengthened. However, in Xu's version, the moon blends with seeming curiosity for human mind and world. The poet then happily invites her into the group. Along with the shadow, they become three friends.

In Owen's version, the moonlight, the shadow and the poet do not interact with one another. "The moon *just* lingers on (emphasis mine)" when the poet sings. Conversely, in Xu's version, the poet sings and the moon then becomes an attentive audience.

Owen's version reveals that peaceful moments are often suddenly victimized by an inevitable mutability and a profound solitude. In Owen's narrative, the poet bears deeply in mind that friendship is only shared on the condition of soberness, and that a drunken spirit will finally go on its own way until it finds its doom. Xu's version contrasts with this sobriety. The poet is blessed with an ethereality full of possibilities. The moon, the shadow, and the poet as three friends share the happiness, which will later evolve into an everlasting memory brewed into a fragrant wine. And each may find a path, which leads somewhere and everywhere.

In addition to the prior point, in Owen's version, secularity seems what the poet tries to get rid of. In Xu's version, it is something to experience and transcend. Owen depicts the poet, the moonlight and the shadow as three wanderers to move beyond human cares and find an eternal bliss outside secular boundaries. In Xu's version, the three friends cling satisfactorily to earthly love, and not without a wish that their friendship will outshine the earthly presence. They are cheered up by a fantasy, though quite unattainable, that they should someday meet beyond the stars.

Moonlight as the focus of this poem plays a very important part in western and Chinese aesthetics. Both western and Chinese poets like using moonlight as a metaphor, though usually in different ways. In western literary imaginations, moonlight is seldom connected with pleasant themes. For instance, in *Romeo and Juliet*, Juliet tells Romeo not to swear by the moon because she fears the inconstancy of the moon will foreshadow the variability of their love. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, when Theseus threatens Hermia with the prospect of being a nun, he refers to the moon as cold and fruitless. However, for Chinese, the moon can symbolize transcendence and companionship. For instance, a Tang dynasty poet Zhang Ruoxu (张若虚) once wrote "The Moon Over the River on a Spring Night (春江花月夜)," which depicts the moonlight in the most transcendent way. In Zhang's imaginations, the moon, the sky, and the tide fulfil a poetic landscape which transcends secularity. In his poetic imagery, the moonlight decorates people's dreams with an eternal bliss, and fills people's hearts when they wish to reunite with loved ones but cannot. The moonlight can also transcend space and time, which reaches out to people in the most intimate way, and brings them well wishes from a faraway land.

The two translation versions of Li Bai's *Yue Xia Du Zhuo* (drinking under moonlight) are two narratives, and their different depictions of moonlight show different aesthetics. They both delete, add, misuse and appropriate some parts of the original poem. I

argue, the subtlety and exuberance of the poem dwell upon different readings, both by people geographically nearer to the aesthetics, like Xu Yuanchong, and psychologically intrigued by the aesthetics, like Stephen Owen. An ancient Chinese philosopher, Zhuangzi, once argues, "'this' is also 'that,' 'that' is also 'this.' When we cannot tell from 'this,' we can tell from 'that,' and vice versa." (Zhuang 2018, p. 67) He believes one side, through which people project and express, and the other side, through which people receive and take, will eventually help clarify and prove each other. Xu Yuanchong reconstructs the poem from within-the-context, while Stephen Owen reimagines the poem from beyond-the-context, which are both beneficial.

The Opening Image and Human Sentiments: How to Understand Their Connection?

Even though all entryways are beneficial, I argue we still need to know how ancient Chinese poems were created in their own era, which will not help explain all, but explain more. In this part, I will discuss one artistic technique in ancient Chinese poetry: 'Xing (兴)'. Many western scholars have been puzzled about arbitrary connections between opening images of Chinese poems and human sentiments. Stephen Owen is one of them. He once commented: "In many cases the connection between the opening image and the human sentiment seems arbitrary, perhaps an accident of rhyme or play on an image that may have been associated with a tune or tune type." (Owen 1996, p. 43)

But this is not the case. The connection is not arbitrary. Besides, it is deeply rooted in ancient Chinese aesthetics known as 'Xing,' which literally means 'evoking.' In *Wenxin in Diaolong (Literary Mind and Dragon Carving 文心雕龙)*, one of the most well-written works on ancient Chinese literary theory, one chapter is entitled 'Bi Xing (比兴),' which deals with the concept and practice of 'Bi (comparing)' and 'Xing (evoking).' 'Bi' and 'Xing' are defined in the following way:

'Bi(comparing)' is to compare the characteristic of an object with that of another, while 'Xing(evoking)' is to evoke human sentiments. By 'comparing the characteristic of an object with that of another,' I mean highlighting of the characteristic by drawing a connection between two different things; by 'evoking human sentiments,' I mean the metaphorical expression of human sentiments regarding the subtle relationship between two different things.

(Liu 1982, p. 307)

Zhu Xi (朱熹), a leading scholar in Song dynasty, wrote a book entitled *Comments on Book of Poetry (Shiji Zhuan 诗集传)*, which has become a must-read for later generations in Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties. He sees many poems in *Book of Poetry* as marvellous examples of 'Xing,' which he defines in the following way: "poets use 'Xing' when they begin their poems with discussions of other objects, and then gradually elaborate their main argument along with expressions of human sentiments." (Zhu 2007, p. 2)

Many ancient Chinese poems begin with the discussion of seemingly random objects, which in fact is not random at all. Since many western translators of ancient Chinese poetry do not bear 'Xing (evoking)' as an artistic technique in mind, their translation versions sometimes do not engage the opening image with subtly-expressed human sentiments in a proper way. I will focus on a comparative reading of Stephen Owen's and Xu Yuanchong's translations of *Book of Poetry*, to better explain 'Xing (evoking).'

I will take three poems as examples. In Owen's version, they are entitled "Fishhawk," "Peach Tree Soft and Tender" and "Gather the Fiddleheads." In Xu's version, they are entitled "Cooing and Wooing," "The Newly-wed" and "A Home-sick Warrior."

"Fishhawk"

(Translated by Stephen Owen)

The fishhawks sing *gwan gwan*
on sandbars of the stream.
Gentle maiden, pure and fair,
fit pair for a prince.
Watercress grows here and there,
right and left we gather it.
Gentle maiden, pure and fair,
wanted waking and asleep.
Wanting, sought her, had her not,
waking, sleeping, thought of her,
on and on he thought of her,
he tossed from one side to another.
Watercress grows here and there,
right and left we pull it.
Gentle maiden, pure and fair,
with harps we bring her company.
Watercress grows here and there,
right and left we pick it out.
Gentle maiden, pure and fair,
with bells and drums do her delight.
(Owen 1996, pp. 30-31)

"Cooing and Wooing"

(Translated by Xu Yuanchong)

By riverside a pair
Of turtledoves are cooing;
There is a maiden fair
whom a young man is wooing.
Water flows left and right
Of cresses here and there;
The youth yearns day and night
For the maiden so fair.
His yearning grows so strong,
He cannot fall asleep,
But tosses all night long,
So deep in love, so deep!
Now gather left and right
Cress long or short and tender!
O lute, play music light
For the fiancée so slender!
Feast friends at left and right
On cresses cooked tender!
O bells and drums, delight
The bride so sweet and slender!
(Yan 2020, p. 2)

《关雎》

关关雎鸠，在河之洲。
窈窕淑女，君子好逑。
参差荇菜，左右流之。
窈窕淑女，寤寐求之。
求之不得，寤寐思服。
悠哉悠哉，辗转反侧。
参差荇菜，左右采之。
窈窕淑女，琴瑟友之。
参差荇菜，左右芣之。
窈窕淑女，钟鼓乐之。

Many readers may ask, why does the poem begin with 'The fishhawks sing *gwan gwan*? What is the relation between the singing of fishhawks and a fair maid fit for a prince? How does watercress function in this poem? What does it all mean? A quick explanation: This is 'Xing (evoking).' In Zhu Xi's *Comments on Book of Poetry (Shiji Zhuan)*, he explains with details why fishhawks (or turtledoves in Xu's version) and watercress make sense. '*Gwan Gwan*' is the sound fishhawks make when wooing partners. They make a perfect pair by the riverside, with sincere fondness and trust for each other. A well-bred beautiful maid also fascinates a noble prince's heart. How the prince wishes he could make a lovely pair with the lady, and witness the flow of time together with her, just like these water birds! The watercress grows here and there waiting to be picked out. The fair maid, who enlightens the prince's imagination, and whom the prince eagerly wishes to embrace even in dreams, also waits to be pursued, just like the watercress expecting to be discovered by someone. (See Zhu 2007, pp. 2-3)

Owen's translation does not draw a connection between fishhawks' cooing and a prince's wooing. The collecting of watercress and the pursuit of a fair maid are also arbitrarily connected in his narrative. But in Xu's version, he sees how the sound of cooing could be compared with wooing. He also makes each section of his narrative rhythmic, which may arouse readers' imaginations about in-built connections, as is suggested in "Now gather left and right / Cress long or short and tender! / O lute, play music light! / For the fiancée so slender!"

The next poem I will discuss is about a newly-wed maid, who shares something in common with a soft and tender peach tree.

"Peach Tree Soft and Tender"
(Translated by Stephen Owen)

Peach tree soft and tender,
how your blossoms glow!
The bride is going to her home,
she well befits this house.
Peach tree soft and tender,
plump, the ripening fruit.
The bride is going to her home,
she well befits this house.
Peach tree soft and tender,
its leaves spread thick and full.
The bride is going to her home,
she well befits these folk.
(Owen 1996, p. 34)

"The Newly-wed"

(Translated by Xu Yuanchong)

The peach tree beams so red;
How brilliant are its flowers!
The maiden's getting wed,
Good for the nuptial bowers.
The peach tree beams so red;
How plentiful its fruit!
The maiden's getting wed;
She's the family's root.
The peach tree beams so red;
Its leaves are lush and green.
The maiden's getting wed;
On household she will be keen.
(Yan 2020, p. 8)

《桃夭》

桃之夭夭，灼灼其华。
之子于归，宜其室家。
桃之夭夭，有蕢其实。
之子于归，宜其家室。
桃之夭夭，其叶蓁蓁。
之子于归，宜其家人。

This poem describes the beauty of a newly-wed maid, which is also a great example of 'Xing (evoking).' The peach tree beaming red represents a proper time for marriage, and it pleases the poet's eyes. A beautiful maid's virtue, in the poet's eyes, will well fit her new household, and what she brings to the new family must be as pleasant as the fragrance and elegance of the peach tree. Xu's translation makes the focus of this poem clearer, as he directly translates the title into "The Newly-wed." And through a masterful use of rhymes, Xu also helps readers see peach tree and a newly-wed maid not randomly connected, but share characteristics in common: the flower beaming red symbolizes the maid's beauty; the plentiful fruit of peach trees may symbolize the maid's fertility and future contributions to the household; the lushness and greenness of the leaves of peach trees also symbolize the future prosperity and harmony in the household. In Owen's version, the above-said connections are vague, which may be because of his repetitive use of similar sentence patterns like "well befits this house" and "the bride is going to her home" without further explanations.

The following poem depicts a warrior in a foreign land, who is melancholic when seeing fiddleheads around, and desperately wishes to go back home.

"Gather the Fiddleheads"

(Translated by Stephen Owen)

Gather them, gather them, fiddlehead ferns,
fiddleheads now start to grow.
We want to go home, to go home
for the year soon comes to a close.
We have no house, we have no home
all because of the Xian-yun.
No chance to sprawl, no chance to sit,
all because of the Xian-yun. ...

Long ago we marched away
 with willows budding in a haze.
 Back we come today,
 in falling snow, sifting down.
 Slowly we walk the way,
 we hunger and we thirst.
 Our hearts are wounded with pain,
 no man knows how much we mourn.
 (Owen 1996, pp. 41-42)

"A Homesick Warrior"
 (Translated by Xu Yuanchong)

We gather fern,
 Which springs up here.
 Why not return,
 Now ends the year?
 We left dear ones,
 To fight the Huns.
 We wake all night:
 The Huns cause fright....

When I left here,
 Willows shed tear.
 I come back now,
 Snow bends the bough.
 Long, long the way
 Hard, hard the day.
 Hunger and thirst
 Press me the worst.
 My grief o'erflows.
 Who knows? Who knows?
 (Yan 2020, p. 212)

《采薇》

采薇采薇，薇亦作止。
 曰归曰归，岁亦莫止。
 靡室靡家，玁狁之故。
 不遑启居，玁狁之故。

.....

昔我往矣，杨柳依依。
 今我来思，雨雪霏霏。
 行道迟迟，载渴载饥。
 我心伤悲，莫知我哀！

In this poem, the poet describes the melancholy of homesick warriors: how they are exhausted by wars and wish to return home to reunite with loved ones. The first stanza is also a wonderful example of 'Xing (evoking).' Why does the poet begin with discussions of fiddleheads to evoke? According to Zhu Xi's explanation, these warriors gather fiddleheads and eat them when they are in a foreign land, and the fiddleheads remind them of "long, long the way" and "hard, hard the day." (See Zhu 2007, p. 123) Therefore, they use what they see and eat daily to represent themselves, a despair, a weariness, and a hunger to go back home. Again, Xu's version makes the focus of the poem clearer in the title. Besides, Xu interweaves the poet's genuine and subtle senti-

ments into his translation, even adding some parts. For instance, he changes the last part of the poem into a question—not only a statement of warriors' profound grief that "Our hearts are wounded with pain, / no man knows how much we mourn," but also a desire to receive a response, and a spontaneous overflow of concrete sadness, which evolves into a poetic talent and drives them to ask "Hunger and Thirst / Press me the worst. / My grief o'er flows. / Who knows? Who knows?" These lines also move future readers' heart.

How to Understand Scenery Depictions in Chinese Poems?

In this part, I will discuss another artistic technique in ancient Chinese poetry: the connection between scenery depictions and emotions. I will focus on Owen's and Xu's different translations of a famous Tang dynasty poet Du Fu (杜甫)'s *Chun Wang* (view in spring 春望) in particular.

In the poem *Cai Wei* (采薇 *gather the fiddleheads*) discussed above, the line about willow is well-known among Chinese readers. Owen translates it as "Long ago we marched away / with willows budding in a haze." Xu translates it as "When I left here, / willows shed tears." 'Willow (柳 liǔ) in Chinese, is similar in pronunciation to 'stay (留 liú).' "Willows budding in a haze" is not a random depiction, but represents a melancholy when people wave goodbye to each other—a secret wish to stay, even though not allowed by actual circumstances. Readers can also get to know more about the metaphor of willow in one of Li Bai's poems entitled "Hearing the Flute on a Spring Night in Luoyang (春夜洛城闻笛)." It goes like this: "From whose house has come the song of jade flute unseen? / It fills the town of Luoyang, spread by wind of spring. / Tonight I hear the farewell song of Willow Green. / To whom the tune will not nostalgic feeling bring?" (谁家玉笛暗飞声, 散入春风满洛城。此夜曲中闻折柳, 何人不起故园情?) (Xu 2006, 300 *Tang Poems*, p. 143) In ancient China, people break a twig of willow when they part with friends, which symbolizes farewell and nostalgia.

Wang Guowei (王国维), a literary critic in Qing Dynasty, once commented on the relations between scenery depictions and human sentiments in the following way. "When poets project themselves into objects in the surroundings, all these objects add a colour with human sentiments. When poets attempt to be absent from objects in the surroundings, the boundary between poets and objects becomes blurred" (Wang 1998, p. 1) Wang refers to two poetic lines which represent 'projection into objects in the surroundings.' One is from Ouyang Xiu (欧阳修)'s "Butterflies in Love with Flowers (蝶恋花)." "My tearful eyes ask flowers, but they fail to bring / an answer, I see red blooms fly over the swing (泪眼问花花不语, 乱红飞过秋千去)." (Xu 2006, 300 *Song Lyrics*, p. 195) The other is from Qin Guan (秦观)'s "Treading on Grass (踏莎行)." "Shut up in lonely inn, can I bear the cold spring? / I hear at lengthening sunset homebound cuckoos sing (可堪孤馆闭春寒, 杜鹃声里斜阳暮)." (Xu 2006, 300 *Song Lyrics*, p. 319) Most poets in ancient China tend to project themselves into objects of surroundings, and human sentiments are in a metaphorical way well-expressed through scenery depictions. We may thus get to understand Du Fu's *Chun Wang* (the view in spring) better.

"The View in Spring"

(Translated by Stephen Owen)

A kingdom smashed, its hills and rivers still here,
spring in the city, plants and trees grow deep.

Moved by the moment, flowers splash with tears,
alarmed at parting, birds startle the heart.
War's beacon fires have gone on three months,
letters from home are worth thousands in gold.
Fingers run through white hair until it thins,
cap-pins will almost no longer hold.
(Owen 1996, p. 420)

"Spring View"
(Translated by Xu Yuanchong)

On war-torn land streams flow and mountains stand;
In vernal town grass and weeds are overgrown.
Grieved over the years, flowers make us shed tears;
Hating to part, hearing birds break our heart.
The beacon fire has gone higher and higher;
Words from household are worth their weight in gold.
I cannot bear to scratch my grizzled hair;
It grows too thin to hold a light hairpin.
(Xu 2006, *300 Tang Poems*, p. 147)

In Owen's version, flowers can splash with tears and birds can startle the heart. He creatively vivifies and personifies flowers and birds. In Xu's version, there is a more intimate connection between sceneries and emotions. Flowers can make people shed tears, and birds' song can speak to people's heart. The poet projects himself into objects around him when thinking about the past splendours of the nation, the mutability of fate, the good old days which gradually sink into oblivion, and his own patriotic heart beyond any doubts. Scenery depictions and human emotions are interwoven. Both Owen's and Xu's translation versions are faithful to the poet's subtle and profound sentiments.

A Tentative Conclusion

In this essay, I have talked about how different comprehensions of themes and aesthetics result in different translation styles and strategies; the artistic technique 'Xing (evoking),' and the connection between scenery depictions and human emotions. I have argued all entryways to ancient Chinese poems are beneficial; readers may get nearer to aesthetics of original poems with more knowledge about literary contexts and techniques; and different translation versions represent different aesthetics. There are many other aspects of ancient Chinese poetry worth discussing, which include picturesque and musicality. I hope I could have a future chance to write about them. Chinese aesthetics could and should contribute to the vastness of literary imaginations shared by humankind, and hopefully this essay may enlighten more discussions.

Works Cited

- Liu Xie. *Wenxin Diaolong (Literary Mind and Dragon Carving)*. Nanning: Li River Press, 1982.
(刘勰. 文心雕龙. 南宁: 漓江出版社, 1982.)
- Owen, Stephen. *An Anthology of Chinese Literature: Beginnings to 1911*. London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996.
- Wang Guowei. *Renjian Cihua (Comments on Chinese Poems and Lyrics)*. Shanghai: Shanghai Ancient Classics Press, 1998.
(王国维. 人间词话. 上海: 上海古籍出版社, 1998.)
- Xu Yuanchong, trans. *300 Song Lyrics*. Beijing: China Translation & Publishing Corporation, 2006.
(许渊冲 (译). 宋词三百首. 北京: 中译出版社, 2006.)
- Xu Yuanchong, trans. *300 Tang Poems*. Beijing: China Translation & Publishing Corporation, 2006.
(许渊冲 (译). 唐诗三百首. 北京: 中译出版社, 2006.)
- Yan Hong. *Yanyan Yufei: Meide zhixide Shijing (Swallows Flying Together: Beautiful Book of Poetry)*. Trans. Xu Yuanchong. Wuhan: Changjiang Literature & Art Publishing House, 2020.
(闫红. 燕燕于飞: 美得窒息的诗经. 许渊冲 (译). 武汉: 长江文艺出版社, 2020.)
- Zhu Xi. *Shiji Zhuan (Comments on Book of Poetry)*. Nanjing: Phoenix Press, 2007.
(朱熹. 诗集传. 南京: 凤凰出版社, 2007.)
- Zhuang Zhou. *Zhuangzi Jinzhu Jinyi (Translations and Comments on Zhuangzi)*. Beijing: The Commercial Press, 2018.
(庄周. 庄子今注今译. 北京: 商务印书馆, 2018.)

Right to Untranslatability and Hospitality of World Literature

TINGWEN XU

Abstract

For translation studies, untranslatability has long been deemed as an obstacle which engenders linguistic and cultural loss of the source text. In terms of world literature's development, however, untranslatability can be regarded as the right of non-English literature to resist the Anglocentric literary mainstream. By examining the Chinese texts chosen for translation after 1949 and studying the untranslatability of literature from assorted trajectories within the Chinese context, this paper discusses the possibility for Chinese literature to enjoy the right to untranslatability in the international literary system that seems to be Anglocentric, based on which exploring the hospitality of world literature at present.

Keywords: untranslatability, world literature, literary hegemony, Chinese literature.

Speaking in narrow terms, translation is to find the equivalent expressions of the source text in the target language. On account of the linguistic and cultural differences, it is almost unavoidable to encounter, for instance, terms, concepts or styles that cannot be rendered, the phenomenon of which named by Catford (1965) as untranslatability. In translation studies, untranslatability has long been regarded as an obstacle that hinders the process of translation. However, it is such untranslatability that enables translation to mark the peculiarity of the source language-culture(s). By retaining the exclusive features, non-English writings can emphasize their linguistic and cultural identities in the domain of world literature. In this sense, untranslatability can be deemed as a way of resisting the Anglocentric literary mainstream. Hence, it seems to be increasingly essential to have a discussion about the right to untranslatability and the role translation plays in strengthening the position of various non-English literature.

To translate Chinese literary works into English is always a challenge, encountering difficulties such as polysemy and realia. With the more frequent interlingual and cross-cultural communications between the east and the west, untranslatability has become a popular topic in the studies on the exportation of Chinese literature. Fan Min (2007), for instance, examines the cultural issues in translating Chinese idioms in *Honglou Meng* (Dream of the Red Chamber). Laurence Wong (1997) and Helena Wu (2012) discuss respectively the untranslatable elements in *wuxia xiaoshuo* (martial arts fiction) which is a unique genre of Chinese literature. These researches, as well as other studies from similar perspectives, stress more on the cultural connotations hard to translate and the strategies used to ameliorate the untranslatability of Chinese literature. But it might also be intriguing to discuss the possibility of preserving such untranslatability in Chinese literature, especially when the monolingual understanding of world literature is meant to be eliminated.

1. Liberty of the Source Texts

The right to untranslatability, as is interpreted in this article, refers to the liberty of Chinese literature and other non-English literature to choose what to be (un)translated and the way of translation such as strategies employed to render a text into English. Since the global literary system seems to be Anglocentric, it is essential to first have a discussion about whether Chinese literature is now enjoying the right to untranslatability. Back in the middle of the twentieth century, non-western textual traditions made their first appearance during the decolonization era. However, such engagement of non-English literature has been made through the “philological Orientalism” which is incorporated “in a genealogy of cultural power that current theorizations hide [partially] from view (Mufti 2010: 459; 461)”. The world literary system, although seemingly diversified, is in essence still operated in a monolingual way. Such point of view can be fortified through the study of the English translations of Chinese literature. To some extent, the hegemony of English literature is reflected in the selection of the Chinese texts. Instead of being decided by Chinese authors or translators, Chinese literature’s right to be (un)translated seems to be often in the hand of western sinologists or the market of English literature. “Many Chinese writers claim that what gets translated into English are not the most representative works, but the works most accessible to the understanding of Western readers (Balcom 2008: 19)”.

If one looks up the archives of English literary reviews such as *Times Literary Supplement*, it is easy to conclude that the Chinese works translated into English since 1949 can be divided into the following categories, namely ancient Chinese classics, novels concerning the turmoil of revolution and few contemporary ones written by Chinese authors recognized by the western academia. Contemporary Chinese literature with less ideological concerns or written by less-known authors seem to be ignored to a large extent. Some might argue that such phenomenon results from the fact that there are no excellent literary works from China in the modern times. This can be partly confirmed by the negative comments on contemporary Chinese literature back in the 1950s to 1970s. For instance, in the 1955 volume of *TLS*, the literary pieces published in *Chinese Literature*, an influential literary periodical of China, were criticized as “deadly dull”¹. To some extent, the deficiency of contemporary Chinese literature in the English literary domain could be ascribed to the lack of Chinese masterpieces during that historical period. However, the untranslatability of Chinese literature as was mirrored in such deficiency was also the deliberate choice of the English-speaking countries in consideration of both market demand and ideological struggle. Such conclusion was drawn because the situation of contemporary Chinese literature in western countries did not change in the following decades even when Chinese literature reached its peak in the 1980s.

During this prime time of Chinese literature, Foreign Language Press of China published “Panda books” that compiled the English versions of the qualified Chinese literature selected from all historical periods. Nevertheless, this book series failed to arouse the interest of the western audience. The readers had no interest in the “dull” life of China, but were fascinated more by “the many bestselling memoirs and real-life horror stories that have come out of post-Mao China” such as *Life and Death in Shanghai* (1986) by Zheng Nian which records the author’s personal experiences during the Great Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). The “Panda books”, with the intention to imitate the “Penguin books”, were “more like introductions to university texts and school readers” (Kneissl 2007: 204). Yet even in the academic context, Chinese authors and translators still failed

to enjoy the right to decide what to be (un)translated. Ancient Chinese literature seemed to be more popular than the contemporary pieces in Sinological studies. *The Golden Casket* (1965), a collection of traditional short stories from ancient China chosen by sinologists, was published in English in the 1960s despite the fact that it might not be “academic” enough since the stories are “weak in characterization and realistic detail...[and] poorly constructed”. Obviously, Chinese intellectuals tried to select texts according to Chinese aesthetics, but the right to untranslatability was still seized by the Anglocentric literary system. Chinese authors were not influenced by such trend, but “surely it affect[ed] what gets translated and published” (Kinkley 2002: 275) because Chinese translators then had to render ancient Chinese classics “to attract foreign readers to have a look at contemporary Chinese literature” (Ni 2012: 25)². Nowadays, Chinese literature is still struggling for such right. Howard Goldblatt, an American sinologist that dedicates to the translation of contemporary Chinese literature, used to say that he has a standard for translation, i.e. to translate only the literature that is able to be published in the western countries³. Although his excellent translation is believed to have helped the Chinese author Mo Yan win the Nobel Prize, it is still difficult for him to find a place in the western market for other contemporary Chinese writers such as Liang Xiaosheng.

2. The Invisible Source Language

The loss of the right to untranslatability of Chinese literature is also reflected in the role Chinese language plays in the process of translation. There seems to be a strange phenomenon that English-speaking translators who know nothing about Chinese language can carry out the work of rendering Chinese literature. *The Golden Casket*, for instance, was translated into English from not the original Chinese text, but the German version. Such means of translating Chinese literature is “a roundabout way...that has been tried before and has yet to be thoroughly successful”⁴. With the absence of the original text, the English version of this book fails to follow the concise style of ancient Chinese short stories. Its verbosity can be discerned in the following translation of the story “Li Wa Zhuan (Story of a Singsong Girl)” written by Bai Xingjian of the Tang Dynasty (618–907A.D.)

ST:

生忽见之，不觉停骖久之，徘徊不能去。

TT1:

Catching sight of her so unexpectedly, the young man involuntarily reined in his horse and for some time stood rooted to the spot as if under a spell. Then he rode up and down without being able to summon the strength of purpose to continue on his way.

(by Christopher Levenson)

TT2:

When he saw her, the young man unconsciously reined in his horse and hesitated, unable to tear himself away.

(by Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang)⁵

The original sentence only contains fifteen Chinese characters, while Levenson’s translation is long-winded. Compared with the Yangs’ translation which is more accurate, it is also apparent that Levenson’s version deviates from the source text. The most obvious mistakes lie in the two underlined phrases which have never appeared in the Chinese text. The absence of source language in the translation of Chinese literature was

a common phenomenon back in the 1960s because “only a handful of people will be able to enjoy [Chinese literature] in the original” although there was “the mushrooming of Chinese departments in universities.” It was then natural for the western literary circle to witness the birth of *Cathay* (1915), a collection of classical Chinese poetry rewritten in English by Ezra Pound, the translator again being utterly ignorant of Chinese language.

T. S. Eliot’s appraised, in the 1928 introduction to *Selected Poems*, that Ezra Pound was “the inventor of Chinese poetry”. Such comment was literally true because the poems in *Cathay* were “translated” on the basis of Ernest Fenollosa’s notes on the classical Chinese poetry. Intriguingly, Fenollosa knew perhaps only little about Chinese language and thus studied the poems with Japanese poets and scholars who used in teaching the method of *kundoku*. The word means reading the Chinese characters using Japanese pronunciations which allows those who lack the knowledge of Chinese language to study Chinese poetry. Fenollosa’s notes on Chinese poems only encompassed, consequently, the original Chinese text, the Japanese pronunciation of the Chinese characters and the English meaning of each character. In other words, Chinese language was almost entirely excluded in the whole process of creating *Cathay*. Predictably, *Cathay* was largely influenced by Japanese and holds little fidelity to the original Chinese poetry. In the translation of the following poem “Seeing Meng Haoran off at Yellow Crane Tower” by the Tang poet Li Bai, it is noteworthy that Pound did a literal translation. The term “smoke-flower”, for instance, is the word-to-word translation of the two Chinese characters “烟 (smoke)” and “花 (flower)” while the connotative meaning of the Chinese phrase “烟花” should be the beautiful scenery in spring. Moreover, the words “Ko-jin” and “Ko-kaku-ro” obviously have Japanese origin, resulting from the *kundoku* teaching method. Pound also abandoned Chinese poetry’s convention of using sentences of even numbers.

ST:

故人西辞黄鹤楼，烟花三月下扬州。
孤帆远影碧空尽，唯见长江天际流。

TT1:

Ko-Jin goes west from Ko-kaku-ro,
The smoke-flowers are blurred over the river.
His lone sail blots the far sky.
And now I see only the river,
The long Kiang, reaching heaven.

(translated by Ezra Pound)

TT2:

My friend has left the west where towers Yellow Crane,
For River Town while willow-down and flowers reign.
His lessening sail is lost in the boundless azure sky,
Where I see but the endless River rolling by.

(translated by Xu Yuanchong, a famed Chinese translator)

From the above examples, it can be indicated that not only does Chinese literature fail to decide what to be (un)translated into English, it also encounters difficulty in using Chinese as the source language in the process of translation which reflects from another perspective

that Chinese literature has been deprived of its right to untranslatability. Some might say that such way of translation helps Chinese literature circulate internationally. For example, although *The Golden Casket* is inadequate as for its translation, it has introduced for the first time some ancient Chinese short stories never rendered into English. However, one must be wary of whether the absence of the source language in translation is the expedient to integrate non-English works into the global literary system or a means of strengthening the monolingual hegemony of world literature.

3. Recapture of the Right to Untranslatability

It is apparent that the right to untranslatability as for Chinese literature is still grasped by the Anglocentric literary circle. It is then worth considering whether there is possibility for Chinese literature to get its right back and put into practice such untranslatability at its own will in the Anglophone literary milieu. It seems to be a simple task: to resist translating the literary works into English or to select the works based on the indigenous aesthetics and translate them properly into English other than localizing entirely the untranslatable elements. But in effect, the situation may be more complicated. The former idea seems to be a drastic way of rejecting the Anglocentric understanding of world literature and is consequently advocated by some authors who support strongly non-English literature. The Welsh poet Twm Morus, for example, has refused to have his works translated into English in order to be “in solidarity with a beleaguered culture”⁶. Similar point of view is adopted in terms of the translation of African languages into English. Such translation is regarded by some scholars as “a form of containment” or as, in a metaphorical way, a “colony” (Coetzee 2013: 383-4). Translation can be, as is believed by Niranjana (1992: 2), “a practice shapes, and takes shape within, the asymmetrical relations of power that operate under colonialism”. It is hence deemed as a resort to “marginalize the original utterance or text” and consequently “serves to extend and confirm monolingual privilege” (Coetzee 2013: 383; 388). Thus, it seems necessary to oppose such translation with the purpose to “destabilize the hegemony of English” (ibid.: 383). But such refusal, if interpreted from another perspective, can be regarded as a kind of silence. Instead of resisting the current inequality in world literature, such refusal is actually handing over the right to untranslatability of non-English literature to the Anglophone groups, being “an inadvertent running-dog for the Anglocentric narrative”⁷.

The latter idea of choosing literature for English translation on the basis of the aesthetics of the source language-culture may sound familiar. This was exactly what the “Panda books” did and the result of such effort is clearly mentioned in the previous discussion. Although there might be difficulties from both linguistic and cultural aspects, the translation of Chinese literature is not a job that cannot be completed. However, it will be pointless to do so if no one has the interest to read the rendered Chinese works. To include Chinese literature in the world literary domain means more than a self-complacent monodrama with translation employed as the main “playwright”. According to some existing examples of translating Chinese literature into English, even for those works that taking into consideration both Chinese literary aesthetics and western standards, it is still grueling for them to fully establish themselves in the Anglocentric system of world literature. The works of Mo Yan, said Howard Goldblatt, attracted the attention of the English readers only within the first three months after the author acquired the Nobel Prize for literature⁸. Professor Goldblatt is an experienced translator of contemporary Chinese literature, and therefore it can be inferred that he knows well the needs of both

the Chinese and English sides. However, the translated Chinese works only enjoyed a transient success in the English-speaking countries.

The Three Body Problem trilogy which has been awarded the Hugo Prize in 2015, is another “popular” Chinese literature in the West in recent years. It has faced a situation similar to Mo Yan’s works. Although this sci-fi series received positive comments from icons in non-literary areas such as Cameron who was “stunned and blown-away” by the novels and Obama who “ended up in really liking [the story]”, it was undeniable that the trilogy was more popular in countries like Japan than in the western countries.⁹ Liu Cixin, the author of this sci-fi trilogy, is the successor of the literary aesthetics of Arthur C. Clarke, the well-renowned British sci-fi writer. Liu said that all his works are the poor imitation of Clarke’s *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968). Science fiction is a literary genre that roots deeply in western popular culture which makes it easier for *The Three Body Problem* to find a place in the English market than other canonized Chinese literature. Although Liu’s trilogy starts with the Great Cultural Revolution which is of Chinese flavor, most of its designs as for characters and plots can be integrated in the English sci-fi system. If such novel which is connected closely to English literature is still under strain in the domain of world literature, it will no doubt be difficult for other Chinese fictions to recapture the right of untranslatability. *Qin Qiang* (Qin Opera), for example, is a representative novel written by Jia Pingwa, a famous author in China. The novel is about a unique kind of local Chinese opera and the profound changes in the rural area during the reform and opening-up period of China. It is now deemed as a contemporary classic in China. His translator Howard Goldblatt, nevertheless, suspected whether this book would have readers in the English world. Chinese literature with high quality but low market expectation is experiencing difficulty even in finding a publisher in the West, let alone enjoy the right of untranslatability in the Anglocentric literary system.

Likewise, strategies such as foreignization can certainly be adopted as for the linguistic and cultural parts which are untranslatable in the Chinese texts. However, such attempt may only be regarded as a means of adding an exotic touch to the target text because the English-speaking readers perhaps cannot be bothered to dig up what is buried under the untranslatability, especially when footnotes are not commonly applied in English literature. Regrettably, “there has never been a Chinese [literary] blockbuster in an overseas market (Kinkley 2002: 274)”. For a long time, “the majority of translations of [Chinese] fiction...[has been] done by sinologists for other sinologists” (Kneissl 2007: 205). Such phenomenon seems to echo the above argument that only those experts (usually sinologists) who are interested in China and its culture will have a positive attitude towards the untranslatability of Chinese literature. *The Golden Casket*, Pound’s *Cathay* and Mo Yan’s translated works, for example, all raised more attention in the English academic circle than in the western public. To take back the right to untranslatability may sound easy, but it is in effect an arduous and complex task for Chinese literature. It then becomes significant for those who are concerned with the international development of Chinese literature to find out the reasons behind this plight in order to fight for equality in the Anglocentric literary system.

4. Hospitality as the Foundation

The rationale behind such difficulty may lie in the fact that the English literary circle lacks the foundation for accepting Chinese language-culture. Translation, as an activity including both linguistic and cultural transfer, can be deemed as an important way

of spreading foreign cultures. By adapting and adding the “foreign import” to the “indigenous culture”, traditions of the recipient can be changed which, from time to time, is even reckoned as a “driving-force of history” (Eisenberg 2005: 99-100). Nevertheless, such acculturation through translation will be affected by factors such as the willingness of the target audience to accept the source language-culture. From the previous discussion, it can be indicated that the global literary system with an Anglocentric narrative is not that hospitable to non-English literature. Difficulty in creating the diversity of world literature is then inevitable because the success of such aspiration not only calls for the participation of the source language-culture, but also requires the efforts of the target language-culture. Chinese *wuxia xiaoshuo* (martial arts fiction), contains possibly more untranslatable elements than other Chinese literary genres because of its strong Chinese characteristics. However, websites such as “Wuxiaworld” has been established by the foreign fans of this Chinese genre. Despite the challenges in translation, the aficionados have translated voluntarily and successfully some *wuxia* fictions. It proves that the right to untranslatability can be enjoyed when readers from the recipient countries are ready to welcome the source language-culture. Another attestation of such argument is related to the translation of Buddhist sutras in ancient China.

Back in 68 A.D., White Horse Temple was established by the feudal government of the Eastern Han as the first Buddhist temple in China. Since then, Buddhism has played a pivotal role in the spiritual life of Chinese people. The admiration of Buddhism reached its peak in the Six Dynasties (222–589 A.D.) and the Tang Dynasty (816–907 A.D.). The well-known Chinese monk and translator Xuanzang (602–664 A.D.) travelled to India in the seventh century, bringing back plentiful Buddhist classics which were then translated into Chinese by him and his disciples. The translation of Buddhist sutras into Chinese in ancient times, just like the translation of Chinese literature into English at present, has generated different opinions as for the translation strategies. Yancong (557–610 A.D.) argues that the Sanskrit text should be read as it is without being translated into Chinese, while Xuanzang refutes such viewpoint by putting forward the translation theory of “the five untranslatable” (Fu 2012: 61). Under Xuanzang’s standards, transliteration was used for some Sanskrit terms even if they could be translated literally into Chinese. For instance, *Prajñā* was translated as “*bōrě*” instead of “*zhìhuì* (wisdom)” in Chinese to show respect for Buddhism¹⁰. Although such transliteration makes no sense to Chinese readers, it was appreciated in ancient China and remains alive nowadays amongst the Chinese people who believes in Buddhism. Terms translated liberally into Chinese were also welcomed, although Chinese people were unacquainted with such Buddhist concepts. Due to their similarities to native Chinese phrases, such terms have been used more widely in China since their creation. For instance, *zhízhuó* (Upādāna) and *fāngbiàn* (upāya)¹¹ are now applied frequently in Chinese people’s daily life.

With the hospitable attitude towards Buddhism, the influence of this new philosophical school on China has been immense; Buddhist notions have been applied broadly in Chinese literature, music, painting and so on (Yan 2020). Compared with the acceptance of the untranslatability of Buddhist sutras in ancient China, the Anglocentric narrative in world literature shows little hospitality to non-English works such as Chinese literature. It is on account of such inhospitality of the global literary system at present that disenables Chinese literature to take back the right to untranslatability. Hence, the calling for the participation of the English literary circle in promoting Chinese literature should be paid more attention to since it is the basis for enriching the diversity of world literature which is currently monolingual.

5. Conclusion

The language and culture of the minority have attracted increasing attention throughout the world. Many countries have formulated anti-discrimination policies for those languages and are making efforts in the translation field to popularize their literary works. *The EmLit Project: European Minority Literatures in Translation* (2003), for instance, compiles the translated works from nineteen minority languages in Europe. The population base using Chinese is larger than many languages and hence there may be a chance for Chinese literature to be neglected when talking about protecting the diversity of world literature. But to some extent, Chinese literature can also be considered as a kind of “minority”, taking into consideration the status quo of its translations within the somewhat Anglocentric structure of world literature. This is a problem encountered not only by Chinese literature, but also by other non-English literature. According to the discussions in this article, it can be inferred that the global literary system is currently not that hospitable to literary works written in other languages. The right to untranslatability, as a means of resisting the Anglocentric literary milieu, is in fact not in the hand of Chinese literature as well as its non-English companions. In spite of all the efforts, Chinese literature is still struggling for the right to decide what to be (un)translated and the way of translation in the Anglocentric literary circle. Such difficulty may derive from the fact that the English-speaking readers are still reluctant to embrace non-English language-culture. Without such basis in the monolingual literary field, it will be strenuous for non-English literature to introduce itself to English readers. Hence, the effort from the Anglophone side should also be called for because the enrichment of the heterogeneous world literature is a task that should not be accomplished only by non-English literature, but also by the target readers from the English-speaking environment. Although it is perhaps difficult for Chinese literature to recapture the right to untranslatability at present, it should be emphasized that Chinese literature needs not refuse to be translated into English. It may sound plausible for non-English literature to remain untranslated because even the best translation of such literary texts will inevitably engender linguistic and cultural loss. However, the refusal of translation can be misunderstood as a sort of silence. Instead of fighting against the Anglocentric way of understanding world literature, the absence of such literary works in the English form gives up the right to untranslatability. Chinese literature and other non-English literature which is facing the similar situation should be insistent on choosing and translating works based on the indigenous standards. After all, the emphasis on the differences between the traditions of English literature and the assorted literary aesthetics as is embodied in non-English literature is the very foundation for mutual understanding.

University of Leicester, UK

Notes

- * *Hanyu Pinyin* system of Chinese transcription is used in this article where appropriate; the surname of the Chinese authors, translators and scholars is placed before the given name to conform to the Chinese tradition.

¹From *The Times Literary Supplement*, Issue 2774, April 1955, p.35.

²Translated from Chinese into English by the author of this article. For the original Chinese text, please refer to Ni, Xiuhua. "A Survey of English Translations of the 'Seventeen-year Chinese Literature' by Foreign Languages Publishing House.", *Chinese Translators Journal*, no.5, 2012, p.25.

³"Howard Goldblatt: Mo Yan does not speak foreign languages, which is not good for publicity." *The Beijing News*, 15 Oct. 2013, http://epaper.bjnews.com.cn/html/2013-10/15/content_471083.htm?div=-1

⁴From *The Times Literary Supplement*, Issue 3350, May 1966, p.5.

⁵"Li Wa Zhuan (Story of a Singsong Girl)", in Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang. *Tang Dynasty Stories*. Foreign Languages Press, 1986, p.71.

⁶"Against the Current: An Interview with Gwen Davies." *PEN Transmissions*, 27 Aug. 2019, <https://pentransmissions.com/2019/08/27/against-the-current-an-interview-with-gwen-davies/>

⁷Ibid.

⁸"When will Chinese writers get the Nobel Prize again." *people.cn*, 15 Oct. 2013, <http://politics.people.com.cn/n/2013/1015/c70731-23204643.html>

⁹"Economic adviser reflects on 8 years of serving Obama." MSNBC, 15 Jan. 2017, <https://www.msnbc.com/weekends-with-alex-witt/watch/economic-adviser-reflects-on-8-years-of-serving-obama-855354947575>; see also "James Cameron Dialogue Liu Cixin: Why not take a three-body?" YouTube, uploaded by leon copper, 18 Feb. 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iaFWxHRQ8jk>

¹⁰In Chinese, the words should be written as "般若" and "智慧".

¹¹In Chinese, the words should be written as "执著" and "方便".

Work Cited

"Against the Current: An Interview with Gwen Davies." *PEN Transmissions*, 27 Aug. 2019, <https://pentransmissions.com/2019/08/27/against-the-current-an-interview-with-gwen-davies/>

"At Third Hand." *The Times Literary Supplement*, Issue 3350, May 1966, p.5. Gale, http://gdc.galegroup.com/gdc/artemis/NewspapersDetailsPage/NewspapersDetailsWindow?disableHighlighting=false&displayGroupName=DVI-Newspapers&docIndex=68&source=fullList&prodId=TLSH&mode=view&limiter=DA+119490101+-+119661231&display-query=OQE+Chinese+literature&contentModules=&action=e&sortBy=&windowstate=normal&currPage=14&dviSelectedPage=&scanId=&query=OQE+Chinese+literature&search_within_results=&p=TLSH&catId=&u=tlacc&displayGroups=&documentId=GALE%7CEX-1200341634&activityType=BasicSearch&failOverType=&commentary=

"Current Periodicals." *The Times Literary Supplement*, Issue 2774, April 1955, p.35. Gale, http://gdc.galegroup.com/gdc/artemis/NewspapersDetailsPage/NewspapersDetailsWindow?disableHighlighting=false&displayGroupName=DVI-Newspapers&docIndex=35&source=fullList&prodId=TLSH&mode=view&limiter=DA+119490101+-+119661231&display-query=OQE+Chinese+literature&contentModules=&action=e&sortBy=&windowstate=normal&currPage=7&dviSelectedPage=&scanId=&query=OQE+Chinese+literature&search_within_results=&p=TLSH&catId=&u=tlacc&displayGroups=&documentId=GALE%7CEX-1200303902&activityType=BasicSearch&failOverType=&commentary=

"Economic adviser reflects on 8 years of serving Obama." MSNBC, 15 Jan. 2017, <https://www.msnbc.com/weekends-with-alex-witt/watch/economic-adviser-reflects-on-8-years-of-serving-obama-855354947575>

- "James Cameron Dialogue Liu Cixin: Why not take a three-body?" YouTube, uploaded by leon copper, 18 Feb. 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iaFWxHRQ8jk>
- "中国作家何时再拿诺奖: 葛浩文说还得等 (When will Chinese writers get the Nobel Prize again)." *people.cn*, 15 Oct. 2013, <http://politics.people.com.cn/n/2013/1015/c70731-23204643.html>
- "葛浩文: 莫言不会外语 不利于宣传 (Howard Goldblatt: Mo Yan does not speak foreign languages, which is not good for publicity)." *The Beijing News*, 15 Oct. 2013, http://epaper.bjnews.com.cn/html/2013-10/15/content_471083.htm?div=-1
- Balcom, J. "Bridging the Gap: Contemporary Chinese Literature from a Translator's Perspective." *Wasafiri*, vol.23, no.3, 2008, pp.19-23.
- Catford, J. C. *A Linguistic Theory of Translation*. Oxford University Press, 1965.
- Christopher Levenson. *The Golden Casket. Chinese Novellas of Two Millennia*. George Allen and Unwin, 1965.
- Coetzee, Carli. "To Refuse Containment, To Resist Translation." *Interventions*, vol.15, no.3, 2013, pp.383-401.
- Eisenberg, C. "Cultural Transfer as a Historical Process: Research Questions, Steps of Analysis, Methods." *Metamorphosis Structures of Cultural Transformations (REAL : Yearbook of research in English and American literature)*, edited by J. Schlaeger, Gunter Narr, 2005, pp.99-111.
- Fan, Min. "Cultural Issues in Chinese Idioms Translation." *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology*, vol.15, no.4, 2007, pp.215-229.
- Fu, Huisheng. "The Completing Part of the Classical Theoretical System of Buddhist Sutra Translation Studies." *Foreign Languages Research*, vol.133, no.3, 2012, pp.61-66.
- Jeffrey C. Kinkley, "A Bibliographic Survey of Publications on Chinese Literature in Translation from 1949 to 1999." *Chinese Literature in the Second Half of a Modern Century: A Critical Survey*, edited by G. Xu, P. Chi and D. Wang, Indiana University Press, 2002, pp.239-386.
- Kneissl, E. "Chinese Fiction in English Translation: the Challenges of Reaching Larger Western Audiences." *Logos*, vol.18, no.4, 2007, pp.204-8.
- Mufti, Aamir R. "Orientalism and the Institution of World Literatures." *Critical Inquiry*, vol.36, no.3, 2010, pp.458-93.
- Ni, Xiuhua. "Jianguo Shiqi Nian Waiwen Chubanshe Yingyi Zhongguo Wenxue Zuopin Kaocha (A Survey of English Translations of the 'Seventeen-year Chinese Literature' by Foreign Languages Publishing House)." *Chinese Translators Journal*, no.5, 2012, pp.25-30.
- Niranjana, Tejaswini. *Siting Translation: History, Post-Structuralism, and the Colonial Context*. University of California Press, 1992.
- Paula Burnett. *The EmLit Project: European Minority Literatures in Translation*. Brunell University Press, 2003.
- Pound, Ezra. *Cathay*. Chiswick Press, 1915.
- Pound, Ezra. *Selected Poems of Ezra Pound*. Faber and Faber, 1948.
- Wong, Laurence K.P. "Is Martial Arts Fiction in English Possible? With Reference to John Minford's English Version of the First Two Chapters of Louis Cha's *Luding Ji*." *The Question of Reception: Martial Arts Fiction in English Translation*, edited by C. Liu, Centre for Literature and Translation, Lingnan College, 1997, pp.105-24.
- Wu, Helena, Y.W. "A Journey across Rivers and Lakes: A Look at the Untranslatable 'Jianghu' in Chinese Culture and Literature." *452ndF*, no.7, 2012, pp.58-71.
- Yan, Yan. "The Mutual-Influence between Chinese Cultures & Arts and buddhist Scriptures Translation from Han, Wei, Jin to South & North Dynasties." *Lilun Tansuo*, vol. 296, no.1, 2020, pp.5-16.
- Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang. *Tang Dynasty Stories*. Foreign Languages Press, 1986.

Revisiting Bernard Rose's *Frankenstein*: Ugliness and Exclusion

MRIDULA SHARMA

Abstract

Mary Shelley's attempt to present what Ellen Moers labels as a 'female gothic' seems to endorse rigid notions of beauty: the transgression of socially approbated ideals of beauty leads to textual disposal in *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*. Frankenstein's desertion of the creation, for instance, testifies to the writer's conscious effort to portray the beautiful and the ugly within the ambit of societal expectations of physical attractiveness. It is interesting to study the representation of the narrative in cinema because the transposition of Mary Shelley's description into characters played by actors in reality is further influenced by the director's perceptions of the textual reading as well as his presumptions of beauty. Bernard Rose's film titled, *Frankenstein* (2015), appropriates the original text for public consumption: the monster's initial corporeal beauty is transformed into supposed hideousness due to Frankenstein's attempt to further augment his creation's physical strength. The insertion of the monster's Oedipal desire for Elizabeth supplements the investigation in the element of romance that is somewhat governed by the internalisation of conventional ideas of beauty. This paper endeavours to critique the contrast between the textual and cinematic portrayal of Frankenstein's monster by examining the duality in the promotion of beauty in Rose's film and contrasting it with the narrative space within Mary Shelley's 1818 edition.

Keywords: Mary Shelley, Frankenstein, Bernard Rose, Monster, Ugliness, Exclusion.

Introduction

The creations of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Rose's *Frankenstein* have been referred to as the 'monster' in the article. By using this reference, I do not seek to ignore the politics of monstrosity as discussed by several critics in context of Mary Shelley's 1818 novel, titled *Frankenstein*. Since the film manipulates the viewers' gaze at Frankenstein's creation by using the word 'monster' in its subtitles every time he creates an incoherent sound, I attempt to approach the cinematic text by taking into account the outcome of Rose's usage of visually.

Paul O'Flinn¹ suggests that *Frankenstein*² (1818) undergoes 'alteration and realignment' through the operation of criticism, as a function of the shift of the text from one medium to another, and as a result of the unfolding of history itself. This leads toward the conclusion that the textual space within *Frankenstein* can be made to mean different things with the passage of time because of philosophical and cultural developments in the social realm. Irrespective of authorial intention, the interpretation of the text can be reconstructed after the adoption of a different outlook.

The recent scholarship around Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* has positioned the novel within moral fable, political allegory and dystopian science fiction enveloped with Gothic traits. The interpretative scope of the story has transgressed generic divides to establish its oeuvre in various appropriations of drama, cartoon and cinema. In this article, I attempt to study the perpetuation of idealised notions of beauty in Bernard Rose's *Frankenstein*³ (2015) to enable the comprehension of the theological impulse of interlinking the ugly with the evil, and further examine the monster's body under the arena of social anxiety.

Frankenstein (2015) is one of the many contemporary attempts at adaption of the novelistic discourse within Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818). The narratology within the film has been simplified since the monster's outlook is the only narrative agent that dictates the discourse on the altered story to the modern viewers. My argument focusses on social attitudes towards physical appearance, particularly the film's divergence from Kantian⁴ and Burkean aesthetics, and interweaves within its analysis a series of references to the Oedipal complex.

The modifications introduced by Rose in the contemporary cinematic adaptation engineer a distinct addition to the module of Gothic theory. Mary Shelley's darkly brooding protagonist with his haunted past is replaced by Rose's brooding monster who narrates the misfortune of his existence to the film's implied viewers. The materialisation of the novel's story into the audio-visual mode of cinema that is supported by advanced technology augments the paraphernalia of horror.

More importantly, the film redefines contemporary understanding of the Gothic. Ellen Moers⁵ aptly observes that Mary Shelley introduced the process of birth in her fiction as an element of Gothic fantasy, not a component of realism. Rose's film refashions the process of narration to diametrically shift the viewers' reception of this phenomenal story: it ventures to experiment with the narrative to inaugurate novel critical analysis of Mary Shelley's 1818 edition as well as Gothic studies.

In this article, I examine two primary strands: first, I endeavour to explore the process and impact of transformation of the monster's physical features from the supposed domain of beauty to that of ugliness. I undertake the inspection of the scientific acquisition of seemingly ugly bodily features as a consequence of Frankenstein's desire to increase the physical strength of his creature and remove his external deformity.

Finally, I discuss the significance of inserting the character of a prostitute for the monster's sexual satisfaction. Malthusian⁶ assertion of the association of the sexualised body with dirt in juxtaposition with the Victorian⁷ positioning of the prostitute as a 'sewered' body complicates the procedure of examining the sexual activity between the prostitute in the film and the monster. This leads to the interrogation of standardised notions of beauty by inspecting the distorted body of the monster and the sexually exploited body of the prostitute. Using these arguments, the article illustrates Rose's significant addition to the existing scholarship around *Frankenstein*.

The Transition from Beauty to Ugliness

Rose's *Frankenstein* (2015) deviates from Mary Shelley's 1818 novel by engaging in the exhibition of a distinct process of the monster's birth. Frankenstein works with a 'team' to materialise his scientific ambition into reality but keeps the breakthrough of the methodology of giving life to the initial residue with himself. The decision to disconnect from the textual establishment of Frankenstein as an isolated being aids the reconstruction of his graphic character: the renewed portrayal for the twenty-first century viewers reveals

a man who works with a team in spite of his will to preserve a certain degree of secrecy related to the construction of his monster.

The teamwork is effective in the production of a creature that conforms to socially approbated ideals of beauty. Elizabeth, the first human whom the monster encounters after gaining consciousness, whispers, 'So beautiful' while holding his 'beautiful' countenance in her hands. Her characterisation of the conscious monster as 'beautiful' in juxtaposition with Frankenstein's skepticism about the actual possibility of accomplishment of his professional ambition results in an ambiguity while simultaneously leading to the perpetuation of patriarchal ideals.

Frankenstein's suspicion of the monster's consciousness as a movement consequent of what he perceives to be 'muscle spasms' is puzzling because he is expected to be excited at the prospect of his success. Further, the fact that Elizabeth can sense the monster's consciousness while Frankenstein cannot, not only reinforces the popular discourse of maternal sensitivity, but also depletes Elizabeth's professional capacity as a research scientist by shifting the central focus to her maternal responsibility.

The initial projection of the monster as a beautiful creature thematises ugliness as an acquired phenomenon. Textual notions of beauty are dismantled because of the capability of scientific advancements to manufacture and manoeuvre physical appearance of living beings. While the monster's social circumstances in the novelistic tradition are congruous to the conditions that immediately precede the classist rejection of Gallagher's potato⁸ by the English bourgeois because of its association with the proletariat population, the monster's circumstances in the film are not. The idea of accuracy in the accomplishment of Frankenstein's objective is perhaps translated into cinematic reality because of the potency of scientific developments in the contemporary age.

The physical appearance of the monster in the film undergoes manifold transformations by the insertion of multiple narratorial tools. The combination of Frankenstein's interest in the monster as a mere scientific experiment and the eruption of a scarlet-coloured pimple-like protrusion that ultimately resembles a pus-filled boil lead to the monster's biopsy and concludes in the expansive replication of the boils across his entire body. Frankenstein's impatience with a minor, seemingly ugly and abnormal protrusion incites him to extend the magnitude of scientific experimentation with his initial enterprise. This contributes to the nullification of the cinematic incorporation of Frankenstein's team that plays the role of diminishing his isolation in the pursuit of his endeavours. Rose, like Mary Shelly, is successful in presenting and appropriating the portrait of an overambitious scientist who fails to recognise the ramifications of attempting to transgress the limitations of humankind.

Since the shift of the story from the novel to cinema necessitates a change in the plot even before the consideration of content and its politics, the insertion of new events in the film is inevitable. However, the construction of a 'beautiful' creature and his transmutation after biopsy into a seemingly hideous being entails the introduction of a pressing question within critical analysis: has the meaning of scientific transgression evolved with time?

The possibility of production of a living being after scientific intervention was viewed as transgression of nature in the Romantic age because of the improbability of such an occurrence. The dynamic advancements in science and technology from the latter half of the twentieth century are responsible in making the appearance of the idea of such a procedure plausible: the possibility of contemporary scientists to replicate and materialise fabricated ideas in science fiction necessitates the investigation of the notion of transgression. For the twenty-first century viewer, transgression of nature is not the act of creation of the monster, but rather the persistent need to beautify the monster. This

bears witness to the evolvement of the meaning of what constitutes violation of natural laws imposed upon humankind.

The need and impact of the procedure of 'de-beautifying' the monster are fundamental to comprehend Frankenstein's professional expectations as well as his repulsion with the subsequent outcome of deviation from societal expectations of beauty, despite the fact that the onus of the monster's physical transformation lies with his own impatience with imperfection. On witnessing the aftermath of biopsy, Frankenstein remarks, 'I don't want talk about it right now,' and leaves the room with Dr Marcus. Later, he tells Elizabeth that 'this is not what I [he] intended.' His conversation exposes the intention of his experiment: the success of his extraordinary pursuit remains unsatisfactory until the product becomes presentable to the society in terms of external appearance. This advances the examination of the proliferating discourses on contemporary consumption of external appearance keeping in mind the body's physical attractiveness.

The manner in which the textual and the cinematic spaces deal with Frankenstein's aversion to the monster varies notably. The repulsion of Mary Shelley's Frankenstein is influenced by his realisation that the fiction of his unified self in the mirror stage is identifiable with something outside his self, making him lose, as Mladen Dolar argues, 'that uniqueness that one could enjoy in one's self-being.'⁹ Incorporation of psychoanalytic criticism makes the revelation of Frankenstein's horror at witnessing the monster come to life explanatory. In the film, Frankenstein's character is denied the opportunity to exercise the employment of a similar reason to escape the label of myopic disposition.

Rose's Frankenstein, in contrast, refuses to acknowledge that the monster is a 'conscious entity' by arguing that he cannot listen. When the monster murmurs 'Dad' while looking at him, he turns toward Elizabeth and says, 'They're just sounds. Crude sounds. Babies make them and we ascribe meaning to them.' Frankenstein's first response to the initially 'beautiful' monster highlights the fact that the unnatural birth of the monster is sufficient to isolate him from the human world despite the transient possession of external beauty.

External beauty fails to become a denominator that ignites his affection as a parent, leading to the conclusion that the success of the monster's biopsy and his complete beautification after the removal of the scarlet-coloured protrusion would have still not changed Frankenstein's apathy toward him. Considering the extent of his emotional detachment, it is rather evident that he perceives the monster's articulation of affection, as 'crude sounds' after the biopsy is unsuccessful.

Further, Rose's Frankenstein is, unlike Mary Shelley's Frankenstein who is simply an ambitious student of natural philosophy and chemistry, a qualified doctor working with scientific tools to accomplish his task of patrilineal creation. Burke¹⁰ asserts that the ugly is that which the beautiful is not: Rose's Frankenstein's eventual repulsion with the hideous body of the monster is influenced both by Burkean interpretation of ugliness and the culmination of his scientific project into a diseased body.

He cannot be content with a distorted body because the disfigured body is representative of a permanent sickness that a qualified doctor in the twenty-first century finds difficult to approve. In fact, Kantian approach transforms Burke's empiricist aesthetics, but maintains his fundamental assumption of the ugly. Thus, while the grounds of rejection in the text do not transgress beyond Frankenstein's repulsion with Burkean understanding of ugliness, the rationale of abortion of scientific pursuit in the film also inculcates Frankenstein's outlook toward his creation from the lens of a professional doctor.

Dr Marcus and Dr Pretorius are assigned the responsibility to dispose the monster's unconscious body after the unsuccessful biopsy due to cell replication and circuitry issues.

The former decides to keep the monster's eyes, each of which took about six months to print, and the latter starts sectioning the cranium to make the access to the eyeballs easier. The process is aborted after the monster wakes up and kills them both. However, the cut marked on his forehead because of the drill makes his face extremely bloody. The combined appearance of boils and blood creates a ghastly-looking creature, the sight of which becomes abominable to humankind.

Whenever his skin comes in contact with water, the blood vanishes and subsequently his skin's increased whiteness and wrinkles augment the hideousness of the boils on his countenance. His injuries appear even more grotesque when a dog licks his face in delight. After he takes a bath in the hotel room as per Wanda's instruction, some boils appear enlarged, suggesting the possible absorption of water. Finally, the evaporation of water primarily functions to visually enhance the whiteness of the monster's skin.

The monster's description of his temporary stay in a nearby forest after escaping from the laboratory is equivalent to the Homeric 'retarding element,' a term coined by Goethe and Schiller in the late eighteenth century. It provides an escape from the gory imagery created earlier within the laboratory and manages to relax the tension within the narrative by serving the purpose of a digression. The projection of the carefully fashioned story of the monster's unexpected sojourn with the accompanying subtitles, which form a part of the film's narration, assists Auerbach's process of externalisation¹¹ of the phenomena to leave no scope for obscurity. Thus, Rose effectively employs the backdrop of natural landscape against the unnatural body of the monster to manoeuvre the resultant pathetic fallacy toward the process of retardation.

Lastly, the study of Freudian vocabulary of repression distinguishes the ugly from the uncanny by positing that while the uncanniness of an object is subjective to perception, ugliness is universally offensive. The consolidation of cinematic tools in Rose's *Frankenstein* impels the constitution of the monster's ugly body that stimulates fear by virtue of its diseased appearance.¹² Therefore, even though the monster is not opposed to those qualities that are not opposed to ugliness, his transformed appearance becomes opposed to those qualities that constitute beauty. This can be reaffirmed by Gigante's interpretation¹³ of Burkean thought in the aesthetic discourse within the context of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. The representation of beauty in Rose's film is therefore supremely inter-twisted in spite of the absence of literary or cinematic intertextuality that is otherwise abundant in the 1818 edition.

Ugliness, Filth and Exclusion: The Monster and the Prostitute

A blind African blues singer named Eddie replaces Mary Shelley's De Lacey family. The necessity of retaining a visually disabled character during the process of substitution of the De Lacey family stems from the need to conceal the monster's apparent external hideousness. Eddie's first interaction with the monster leads him to conclude that the monster can barely communicate in English. The monster's inability to initiate proper conversation and Eddie's blindness binds them together on account of their disability. Rose's film ventures to add the character of a prostitute within the narrative framework; the monster is acquainted with Wanda when she meets Eddie, her old friend.

The role of the prostitute is essential toward the comprehension of what constitutes the making of Lacquerian modern body. Corbin's¹⁴ assertion that the prostitute is compelled to enter the domain of filth because of the connection between sexual activity and sanitation helps to foreground the comparison of ugliness between Wanda and the monster, and

their exclusion from conscious participation in the society as a consequence of having undesirable bodies. Wanda's body is thus a 'sewer' for the society's carnal excretions.

She asks the monster to take a bath before she can engage in sexual intercourse with him because she presumes that his visible filthiness might somewhat diminish after it gets in contact with a purifying liquid like water. Her assumption stems from the social premise that one of the many functions of water is to act as a means of purification. When she sees the monster's naked body after his supposed purification, she is instantly repelled by the expanse of seemingly contagious boils on his body. Her resistance to his purified body is symptomatic of the societal rejection that he continually encounters since he is viewed as an outsider who threatens to contaminate the normative physical substratum of humankind.

The fact that a prostitute, who is excluded from societal transactions on account of the symbolic interconnection between the sexualised body and dirt, refuses to engage in coital activity with the monster, who is epitomised as a symbol of human transgression of natural phenomenon, complicates the degrees of exclusion for those who have been shifted to the periphery after the process of otherisation. If the bodies of both Wanda and the monster are key narratives in a cinematic text that focusses on the marginalised, then what markers of differentiation can be employed to separate one excluded body from another? Wanda's rejection of the monster gains significance since it displays his continual exclusion even within the faction of the othered.

The monster's desire for Elizabeth resurfaces in his private conversation with Wanda before he takes a bath. After Wanda shows him a video of sexual intercourse and the process of delivering a baby, he supposedly becomes educated about the politics of sex, realises that he cannot remember his childhood, and proceeds to look at Elizabeth's identity card that he had taken while escaping from Frankenstein's laboratory.

His gaze can be interpreted as an outcome of Wanda's attempt at sex education, and the subsequent outburst of his desire to engage in sexual intercourse with Elizabeth. When Wanda notices him gazing at Elizabeth's picture and asks if he wants to 'fuck' Elizabeth, he gives an affirmative answer. However, his gaze can also be read as an indication of his yearning to inquire about his apparently lost childhood and discuss the process of his birth with his maternal parent.

Insertion of pornographic clip that only focusses on the portrayal of the sexualised female body is interesting because of its deliberate deviation from its original purpose to suit the context of the film. Pornographic video, which is produced for titillating the sexual desires of the viewers, serves to function as an audio-visual tool that enables Wanda to educate the monster about sexual intimacy. The nudity in the videoclip explicitly operates to eroticise the female body.

Therefore, Rose disintegrates the dualism of exclusion that is distributed amongst Wanda and the monster and adds the figure of the naked woman in the pornographic clip to complicate the multiplicity of the layers of exclusion within the text. Ironically, even though the sexualised body of the woman in the videoclip is sufficiently appealing for the objective of creating pornography, it is still excluded from the social realm because of its engagement in an activity that monetises the act of intercourse by making the filmed video available for public consumption. Rose's addition of certain sections of the pornographic videoclip supplements the element of irony because he too is interested in capitalising on the eroticised portrayal of the female body within the video.

In the film, Frankenstein's process of deformation makes the monster's body a non-form, which augments the human impulse to associate the ugly with the evil. This

association makes him an undesirable social companion and leads to his abandonment even within the division of minority of which he becomes an unwilling component. Rose's *Frankenstein* resembles Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* for the reason that both fail to employ the Kantian concept of 'categorical imperative,' which is first mentioned in Kant's *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*.¹⁵

Further, Wanda's rejection assumes the rationality of popular action of social exclusion and manifests her adherence to what is perceived to be human norm. It raises an integral question for the monster's prospects, if any, in the human world: does Wanda's rejection imply universal desertion of the monster by offering the moral economy of explanation that repeatedly advances the argument of his repugnant physical appearance? Though the film does not venture to provide a conclusive answer, it does hint at the monster's state of perpetual loneliness by depriving him of human companionship and destroying the few relationships, which he is able to temporarily sustain.

Conclusion

The prohibition of the monster's admission in the societal realm becomes inevitable after Rose's *Frankenstein* completes his unsuccessful biopsy that leads to the metamorphosis of the monster's skin. An unexpected eruption of scarlet-coloured boils leads to the attachment of the label of monstrosity to the monster. He is unsuccessful in retaining the initial acceptance by his creators, especially by Frankenstein. Frankenstein aborts any further attempts to remodel his creature's physical appearance for social sanction.

The only lasting relationship that he manages to establish is that with a dog, who remains with him after his escape from the laboratory and is eventually killed by a police officer during a dispute. The film seems to subtly suggest that the monster cannot expect to find a human companion who will accept him after viewing his physical deformation. Eddie, his temporary companion, is unable to gauge the extent of physical damage that restricts the monster's social advancement. Wanda refuses to engage in copulation with him in spite of his supposed purification by water. The only companion that the film allows him to have is a dog, which cannot perceive and understand the world from human imagination.

Frankenstein's monster therefore becomes the object of detestation because his body performs the synecdochical function of representing the aesthetics of ugliness. Rose's film utilises the popular myth of the ugliness of pimple-like boils, and projects it upon the monster's skeleton to underscore universal repulsion. Societal exclusion fails to become a common denominator to bind Wanda and the monster because of the difference in the degree of disgust that their bodies evoke.

Maternal affection, too, becomes ambiguous when Elizabeth's stance on the monster appears blurred in the narrative. His appearance is sufficient to eradicate the materialisation of his phantasmagoria and consequently the possibility of his union with Elizabeth. Any probability of their relationship is anyway undermined by the politics of belonging which governs the landscape, but the addition of the monster's repulsive physicality makes the idea of their romantic partnership diametrically improbable.

Notes

- ¹ O'Flinn, Paul. 'Production and Reproduction: The Case of *Frankenstein*.' *Popular Fictions: Essays in Literature and History*. London: Methuen, (1986): 194-213.
- ² Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein*. Ed. Maya Joshi. New Delhi: Worldview Publications, 2016.
- ³ Rose, Bernard. *Frankenstein. Alchemy*. 12 April 2015, <https://www.netflix.com/in/>, accessed 1 June 2020 on Netflix.
- ⁴ Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Judgement*. Translated by Werner Pluhar. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987.
- ⁵ Moers, Ellen. 'Female Gothic: The Monster's Mother.' *New York Review of Books*, 1974.
- ⁶ Malthus, Thomas. *An Essay on the Principle of Population*. London: J. Johnson, 1798.
- ⁷ Hwang, Haewon. 'Underground Revolutions: Invisible Networks of Terror in Fin-de-Siècle London.' In *London's Underground Spaces: Representing the Victorian City, 1840-1915*:159-200. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013.
- ⁸ Kuncie, Catherine. 'Review of Practicing New Historicism, by Catherine Gallagher and Stephen Greenblatt.' *Rocky Mountain Review of Language and Literature* 56, no. 2 (2002): 124-26.
- ⁹ Dolar, Mladen. "'I Shall Be with You on Your Wedding-Night': Lacan and the Uncanny.' *October* 58, 1991: 5-23.
- ¹⁰ Burke, Edmund. *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.
- ¹¹ Auerbach, Erich. 'Odysseus' Scar.' In *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature - New and Expanded Edition*. Translated by R. Trask, Willard. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003.
- ¹² Bazin, Andre. *What Is Cinema?* Translated by Hugh Gray, 2nd edn., California: University of California Press, 2004.
- ¹³ Gigante, Denise. 'Facing the Ugly: The Case of "Frankenstein".' *ELH* 67, no. 2 (2000): 565-87.
- ¹⁴ Corbin, Alain. *The Foul & the Fragrant: Odour and the Social Imagination*. London: Papermac, 1996.
- ¹⁵ Kant, Immanuel. *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals: A Critical Guide*. Scotland: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Works Cited

- Pudovkin, Vsevolod. *Film Technique and Film Acting*. Translated by Ivor Montagu. New York: Grove Press, 1958.
- Eisenstein, Sergei. *Film Form: Essays in Film Theory*. Translated by Jay Leyda. 1st ed. California: Harcourt, 1969.
- Metz, Christian. *The Imaginary Signifier*. 2nd ed. Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1982.
- Mulvey, Laura. 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema.' In *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*. Eds. Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999: 833-44.
- Rosenkranz, Karl. *Aesthetics of Ugliness: A Critical Edition*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017.
- Agamben, Giorgio. 'Biopolitics and the Rights of Man.' In *Biopolitics*. Eds. Timothy Campbell and Adam Sitze. London: Duke University Press, 2013.
- Foucault, Michel. 'Scientia Sexualis.' 1st ed. *The History of Sexuality* Vol. 1. New York: Random House, 1978.
- Hogle, Jerrold E. 'Otherness in *Frankenstein*: The Confinement/Autonomy of Fabrication.' *Structuralist Review*, 2, (1980): 20-45.
- Newman, Beth. 'Narratives of Seduction and the Seductions of Narrative: The Frame Structure of *Frankenstein*.' *English Literary History*, 53 (1986): 141-61; repr. in *Frankenstein/Mary Shelley*, ed. Fred Botting (New York: St. Martin's, 1995): 166-90.
- Baldick, Chris. 'The Politics of Monstrosity.' In *Frankenstein's Shadow: Myth, Monstrosity and Nineteenth-Century Writing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990.
- Kestner, Joseph. 'Narcissism as Symptom and Structure: The Case of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*.' From *Frankenstein/Mary Shelley*, ed. Fred Botting (New York: St. Martin's, 1995): 68-80.
- Brooks, Peter. 'What is a Monster? (According to *Frankenstein*).' From *Body Work: Objects of Desire in Modern Narrative* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993].

The Production of Space and Representation of Culture: A Case Study of the Opening Ceremony of Beijing Olympics

YUYING LIANG

Abstract

The construction of the Beijing National Stadium is a larger project of spatial practice. As a modern marvel used as the main venue of the 2008 Beijing Olympics, it entails numerous distinctive characteristics that modern public architectures exhibit, such as unique appearances, spacious architectural spaces, complex spatial architectonics, sense of aesthetics, etc. The production of the spaces of the Stadium facilitates the activities of cultural practices, making possible the presentations of the traditional Chinese culture on the stage of the opening ceremony. The traditional Chinese cultural elements such as scroll painting, Peking opera, Kunqu and traditional Chinese costumes like Hanfu are wonderfully displayed to showcase the world the rich, brilliant and profound traditional Chinese culture. This reflects China's cultural strategies in holding this epoch-making event, and meanwhile reveals that China as an emerging superpower is eager to show the world its cultural confidence in the new historical period of development.

Keywords: Spatial Practice; Modern Stage-Space; Traditional Cultural Elements; Artistic Performances; Representational Practice; Cultural Representation

Introduction

The cultures and ideologies in the western world had experienced significant changes in the 20th century. There were assertions about the end of various traditions. Within these phenomena and representations, the major shifts occurred had resulted in changes in ways of questioning, manners of speaking and modes of explaining, and thus brought about phenomenal alternations in the contemporary cultural and ideological paradigms. And people term these shifts as “turn”, for example, turn of phenomenology, turn of ontology, turn of linguistics, turn of culture, turn of human body, turn of post-colonialism, turn of post-modernism, etc. Amongst these phenomena, issues related to space have been increasingly prominent, and therefore theoretical thinking on space has become an irresistible trend in the contemporary academic and intellectual world. People regard this phenomenon as the spatial turn. As one of the important events in the areas of social life, culture, politics, academic research and philosophical thinking, and many more, the spatial turn has posed urgent demand for scholars to look at contemporary humanities and social sciences with new dimensions, attempting to bring shifts on paradigms to these subjects and hoping to exert seminal impact on the studies of contemporary philosophy, sociology, the science of history, culture, etc. In particular, spatial thinking has been increasingly involved in sociological, philosophical, cultural and literary research.

Admittedly, One of the most important dimensions in spatial thinking is to study space in the context of spatial practice, which involves the production in space as well as the production of space, specifically referring to the production of a variety of things and a set of social relationships in space, and more importantly to the matter regarding the production of space itself. It is meant to study space as a social product, and especially aimed at exploring the intrinsic connections between the production of space and the representation of culture – that is how spatial practices carried out by humans help shape and re-shape spaces and endow them with new meanings and implications. As Henri Lefebvre elaborates in his influential spatial work entitled *The Production of Space*, “We may be sure that representations of space have a practical impact, that they intervene in and modify spatial textures ... Representations of space must therefore have a substantial role and a specific influence in the production of space. Their intervention occurs by way of construction – in other words, by way of architecture, conceived of not as the building of a particular structure ... but rather as a project embedded in a spatial context and a texture which call for ‘representation’ ...” (42). Therefore, to understand the relationships between the production of space and the representation of culture, it is necessary to clarify the term “representation”. Stuart Hall, a British cultural theorist and sociologist, in his book *REPRESENTATION: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, defines representation as a kind cultural practice which endows things with values and meanings. According to Hall, representation is a form of cultural practice which aims to signify symbolic meanings by using a system of signs. Thus, cultural practice is also called representational practices. Just as Hall points out, “The embodying of concepts, ideas and emotions in a symbolic form which can be transmitted and meaningfully interpreted is what we mean by ‘the practices of representation’. Meaning must enter the domain of these practices, if it is to circulate effectively within a culture. And it cannot be considered to have completed its ‘passage’ around the cultural circuit until it has been ‘decoded’ or intelligibly received at another point in the chain. ...” (Introduction 15). To make it clearer, Hall goes on to argue that “It is by our use of things, and what we say, think and feel about them – how we present them – that we give them a meaning. In part, we give objects, people and events meaning by the frameworks of interpretation which we bring to them. In part, we give things meaning by how we use them, or integrate them into our everyday practices. It is our use of a pile of bricks and mortar which makes it a ‘house’; and what we feel, think or say about it that makes a ‘house’ a ‘home’. In part, we give things meaning by how we represent them – the words we use about them, the story we tell about them, the images of them we produce, the emotions we associate with them, the ways we classify and conceptualize them, the values we place on them. Culture, we may say, is involved in all those practices which are not simply genetically programmed into us ...” (3). Based on these arguments, Hall concludes that the understanding of the concept “representation” has historically adopted three approaches: reflectionism, intentionalism and constructionism. Constructionism taken by Hall as an approach for his theoretical research highlights cultural practices and meaning construction of the representation, which seem to reveal that the practices conducted by humans can be seen as cultural practices or signifying practices. This also implies that all humans’ material production practices and the outcomes of these activities are both representational. That is to say, the production process of anything is the construction process of its meaning through representation. For instance, home is not only a physical existence, but penetrated with emotions of its users and through whose experiences of the space to help construct

meanings for it. In this sense, home as an abstract concept as well as a concrete place within which meanings and values are generated through the free play of the agency of the users, or in other words, through spatial practices or representational practices.

Designing Modern Spaces for the Beijing Olympics

Based on Hall's theoretical elaborations, it is arguable that representational practice, as a form of cultural representation, is an important part of humans' spatial practices. In this light, taking the space of the 2008 Beijing Olympics as a case study would echo Hall's claims. It is known to all that Beijing National Stadium (hereinafter referred to as "the Stadium"), which was designed for use throughout the 2008 Beijing Olympics, had been taken as a main venue for the event. The Stadium is also known as the Bird's Nest, due to its outward appearance whose shape resembles a bird's nest. The Design was inspired by the study of Chinese ceramics, in which numerous steel beams are put into use to support the retractable roof of the Stadium. In so doing, it makes possible to shape the outlook of the architecture looking like a bird's nest. The initial visions of the design include taking into consideration myriad requirements for enhancing the functions of the architecture for the purpose of post-Olympic use. After the model of the "nest" proposal was approved by the professional panel and subsequently selected as the top design, the nest-scheme was thereafter officially adopted. The Basel-based architecture team Herzog & de Meuron who was responsible for designing the Stadium reveals that they in the very first place decided to bring something new into the design in part by spurning some of their traditionally conventional practices. As the Wikipedia article "Beijing National Stadium" says, "China wanted to have something new for this very important stadium". On the basis of these ideas and formulations, the design team has tried to make the Stadium somewhat porous like a colossal vessel. And two independent structures were also built in the process, which stand 50 feet apart with a red concrete seating bowl and the outer steel frame around it. In an attempt of discussing the ins and outs of the architectural style of the Stadium, it is hoped to make a conclusion that its architectonics is very much in line with the extraordinary features of modern public architectures.



Fig. 1. The dazzling appearance of the stadium under the night sky of Beijing (Source: Google)

As a modern marvel, the Stadium is organized in the styles of modern public architectures, which lay stress on the use values of their spaces. The construction of the modern spaces has taken into consideration particularly the performances and abilities of the architectures. Hu Miaosheng, an eminent spatial critic in China, studies the frequently-used organizing principles of spatial structures in modern architectures by looking into the construction of the stage-space. Hu, in his book *Reading Space: Aesthetics of Stage Design*, claims that a theatre space commonly adopts a multi-dimensional structure in order to create spaces for implementing actions and aesthetic experiences of, and psychological effect on the participants. Although Hu's spatial studies mainly focuses on the aesthetic values of the stage-space design, it is illuminating for the studies of the Beijing National Stadium as a modern public architectural space. Subsequently, it is to make an analysis of the modern features and multiple functions of the Stadium.

Analyzing the Features of Modern Public Architectures

Firstly, excellent spatial functions. Modernist architectures highlight the functions of spaces. Modernist architects claim that creating spaces with multiple functions is one of the most important missions that architects need to accomplish. Apart from designing a gorgeous appearance for the Stadium, the design team of the Beijing Olympics, which consist of the Swiss architects Herzog and de Meuron, China's Architecture Design & Research Group as well as Arup Group Limited, had attached great importance to deal with the spatial relationships between the stand and the performance venue. What psychological effect would the users of the space achieve when positing themselves within it? This had become a major concern in the design scheme. Undoubtedly the essential function of the Stadium is to serve the athletes and the audience. Thus, questions as how to enlarge its capacity so that it can accommodate more people; how to enhance the audio-visual effect of the space; how to achieve the best interactions amongst the users of the space, and the like, had become major concerns for the designers in formulating the nest-scheme design. Based on these considerations, the architects, Herzog and de Meuron, designed the stand in a bowl- shape for the stadium. The round-shaped stand enables the audience to reach visually every part of the venue during the performances, and also makes possible the effective interactions between the audience and the players within the setting. In addition, safety is an important indicator to show whether the spatial functions are perfected. Accordingly, the escape system of the Stadium like other key factors was prioritized in the whole design. In fact, the Stadium totally has 42 escape tunnels which were designed in the patterns of the cloisters. With this design, the staircases appear to be zigzag and not straight which can help prevent people from falling down and suffering injuries while escaping in emergent situations.

Secondly, Beijing is an ancient capital city which once housed many dynasties in the history of China. The Beijing city has taken the Forbidden City – which symbolizes the centre of power and politics – as the central axis running south to north. The axis runs through the Forbidden City and finally reaches the Olympic village. And the Stadium is located in the northern end of the axis. To combine the classic culture which is passed down through this Royal central axis with the sport spirits of the Olympic Games had constituted a great challenge for the designers. To resolve the problem, Herzog and de Meuron finally found out the solutions by studying the ancient Chinese containers, the jades made in the early stage of history, the pottery jars and porcelains appeared in the Song Dynasty, and other items which are related to the formation of traditional Chinese

culture. The designers imagined the architecture of the Stadium as a container, so the model of china wares is used for reference in the design of the Stadium. Moreover, they are bold to make use of red colour, as red is the dominant tone of the Royal Chinese architectures. Red thus is applied on the walls of the dispatch hall, the surface of the stand, and even chairs are painted with brightly-coloured red in the Stadium.

Thirdly, generally speaking, space is shaped by the structure. When the functions of architectures have been developed to such a level, it may raise higher demands for the size of spaces – that's to require for more spacious spaces. In the case of the Stadium, the difficulty of constructing a larger space lies in the structure which is used to support the roof of the architecture. In practice, the Stadium is made up of 12 reinforced concrete core-tubes, and the shear wall structure consists of a number of beams, plates and columns, some 14,700 pieces of prefabricated stand boards, large-span oblique beams and stands which consist of a lot of profiled components such as oblique beams and cylinders, circular beams, curving walls and many others. The steel structures that are composed of 24 truss gantries constitute the façade of the Stadium. Of which, most of them are straight lines. The upper layers of the steel structures are the ETFE single-layer tensioned membranes, and the under layers are the PTFE acoustic ceilings. The designers made full use of two materials, namely ETFE¹ and PTFE, in order to create desirable indoor lighting effect. Furthermore, the reinforced concretes and steels in free and organic forms are sufficiently used for the purpose of making into play malleability and tensile properties of the two materials, for creating ordinary indoor spaces in the hope of exerting the performances of the materials to the best. Meanwhile, advanced technologies also help to solve the problems of the stands. Different from those used in general-purposed stadiums, the stands specially made for the Stadium are segmented into three levels: upper, middle and lower, and these three levels are firmly and tightly connected together by using cantilever beams. In addition, these stands are expected to meet the need of providing good acoustic effect in the Stadium, for the overlapping stands can help reduce the distance between the first-row seating and the last one, aiming to enhance the experiences of the users in the Stadium.

Fourthly, the beauty of the form. In the earlier days, the *mise en forme* of architectures with large spaces failed to break the limitations of the technologies to create more reasonable and lightweight architectural images, but the development of technologies and the constant improvement of people's aesthetic consciousness have motivated the architects to try hands in constructing different kinds of structures for architectures. They have realized that structures designed with modern concepts have in common many avant-garde features and most majority of them are built with an appearance of exquisite beauty. It has become a fashionable trend that the architects are in pursuit of simpler structures, trying to abandon elements as thick walls, unnecessary materialized parts, etc. In the principles of design, modernist architects like Herzog and de Meuron are in favour of employing the technique of hollowing-out in their designs, which actually has long existed in the traditional oriental craft culture, and here it is combined with advanced technologies in an attempt of building modern structures with hollowing-out style.

Lastly, the colour and texture of space. The colour of space is inseparable from its texture. Only when the principles of colour-matching are addressed, can the problems of texture be dealt with. The Stadium is undoubtedly a masterpiece which appears to integrate Chinese traditional elements with internationally modern popular architectural properties. With the mixture of different materials and styles, the architecture is created

with a multiple functions. For example, the internal and external structures of the Stadium are covered with gray mineral steel meshes woven with transparent membrane materials. Also, the inner and outer sides of the third and fourth layers adopt hidden-framing glass curtain walls which are painted with glaze. The walls in the dispatch hall are made of linens and painted with red coatings, and parts of the ceiling plates and the bottom surfaces of the stand boards are sprayed with black and red coatings respectively. Machine-chopped stones are pieced together to lay the ground for the lobby.

Producing Fantastic Stage-Space for the Artistic Performances

Till now some analysis has been made on the construction of the space of the Stadium as a materialized and concrete entity. As a classic modern architecture, the production of the space of the Stadium is richly filled with the concepts and elements of modernity, which can be seen not only from the structures but also the functions that the Stadium itself displays. On this point, the theoretical hypothesis proposed by Hu can be used for reference. In Hu's spatial theories, the construction of the space of the Stadium exactly reflects the theory of four-in-one spatial structure which demonstrates the fourfold relations of motion space, perception space, aesthetic space and communication space. Amongst these relations, the core value of space lies in its use value which can provides coefficient of reference for space design. Motion space means that the actors carry out their actions within a specific location. For example, a theatre is a motion space in which the performers play out their activities; so a stage-space is the prerequisite for the actors to implement their programmes. And this is the use value of the motion space which lies in the heart of Hu's theories. The Stadium was used as the main venue throughout the 2008 Beijing Olympics and the construction of the stage-space for the opening ceremony has been considered as a big success, which had successfully facilitated the fulfilment of all prepared programmes. In this way, new meanings have been generated through the implementation of the actions of the actors in spaces. This is a form of spatial practices in relation to representation of space leading to signifying practices, which echoes Michel de Certeau's theoretical presumption, as he states in his famous work *The Practice of Everyday Life*, "These 'ways of operating' constitute the innumerable practices by means of which users re-appropriate the space organized by techniques by sociocultural production. ..." (13). With the help of modern stage technologies, along with other necessary tools and equipment, a fantastic stage-space with practical and aesthetic values was produced to make possible the performances presented in the opening ceremony of Beijing Olympics. The stage-space is highly praised by people, especially the shapes, the colours, the lights and shadows and other aspects created in this stage-space are prominent. Undeniably, the magnificence, grandness and beauty of these performing scenes have won praises and admirations of the world. One may ask how it is possible or what had made this happen? Attempting to find answers to these questions would probably lead to some kinds of solutions. The following is to continue using the four-in-one spatial theories formulated by Hu to explore the principles of constructing stage-space out of the Stadium and aims to connect this mode of production of space with the representation of culture, hoping to bright forth some constructive insights of its own for this area of research.

New Features of Modern Stage-Space

Stage is not image but concrete space. This idea is overly emphasized in the work of designing modern stage-space. With the changes occurred in the modern design

principles, modern stage-space has been designed with bizarre features, which is made by the perfect integration of the architectural art and the stage technologies.

Firstly, at the level of architectural art. The architectural space and the stage-space share some commons in terms of practicability and artistry. The form of the stage-space is smaller than the architectural space's, but the stage-space has more dynamic structures than that of the architectural space. Thereby, the creation of stage always takes references from the architectural design.

Secondly, at the level of stage technologies. With the penetration of high technologies in the construction of both architectural space and stage-space, the two kinds of spaces are integrated in terms of forms. When advanced technology equipment is put into use, it can help create desirable stage-space, and in this case the forms of architectural space is heavily relied on to bring into play their flexible modes of operation, and meanwhile to make the performances to be presented in a better way.

The Values of Technologies in Constructing Modern Stage-Space

It goes without saying that performances are carried out in certain settings, or called stages. The conditions of stages are very decisive factors that would affect many aspects of the performances, for example, the performers' movements, the performance itself, the interactions between the audience and the performers, etc. Undoubtedly, the ranges, patterns, styles and other aspects are determined by the forms and status of the stage-space. The Beijing Olympic Stadium is a huge building with a massive ellipsoidal structure, and has the capacity of accommodating more than 90,000 spectators. In order to make the performances audible and visible to all participants, the design and creation of the stage-space within it must be carefully handled. To achieve this goal, the designers resorted to the image technology to project a virtual scroll painting in the centre of the performing venue on which all the programmes unfolded accompanied with the rhythms and melodies of the background music. Obviously, it is a very unique form of stage-space, which fully demonstrates the creative features of the design. Simultaneously, the cultural symbols like mountains, rivers, clouds, Chinese characters, Chinese ceramics, etc., elements that are most frequently-used in Chinese ink paintings, were projected on the surface of the scroll to showcase the world a beautiful picture laden with rich Chinese culture.



Fig. 2 A fantastic stage-space with perfect blend of colour and light. (Source: Google)

Exploring the Traditional Chinese Cultural Elements Displayed in the Performances

All the host countries take the opportunity of holding the Olympic Games to showcase the world their cultures. The Beijing Olympics is not exception. In order to present its age-old, rich, unique and profound traditional cultures, China spared no effort to create a grand feast of visual culture. A variety of traditional Chinese cultural elements were infiltrated in every detail of the whole performance, making the stage-space of the event a platform for cultural representations and the event itself a cultural gala.

A Scroll Painting Serving as the Stage of the Performances

The three concepts put forward by the Beijing Olympics are “Green, Technology, and Humanities”. To practice the concept of “High-tech Olympics”, the Beijing Olympics had been highly technology-assisted, that is a variety of advanced technologies such as aerospace materials, lifting stage, multimedia, LED system, high-tech equipment, etc., had been fully employed in the hope of constructing a desirable stage-space to present a spectacular show. The scroll painting used throughout the performances in the opening ceremony belongs to this kind of such high-tech product.

In general sense, scroll painting is an art form practiced primarily in East Asia. It commonly refers to a painting on a scroll in Asian traditions, distinguishing from hand scroll and hanging scroll. The scroll painting specially designed for the opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympics and used as a stage is different from the traditional scroll paintings. However, the model of the scroll is inspired by ancient Chinese scroll painting. There are tens of thousands of LEDs embedded in the scroll to produce myriad-coloured light. The lighting effect created by the LED system is closely matched with the performances to make miscellaneous fantastic images on the scroll, and the fantasy made by the lighting brings the audience into a dream world. Besides, power-driven devices are installed on the scroll so that it can be unfolded or folded by remote control whenever necessary in the proceeding of the performances. When unfolded, the scroll painting was turned into a huge LCD screen, on which traditional Chinese cultural elements like mountains, rivers, poems, ceramics – images that are commonly used in Chinese ink landscape paintings – are displayed, which symbolizes the long history of traditional Chinese culture. Besides, a clutch of images of “Auspicious Clouds”² are turned into the cross-section of the scroll painting, making it look like flowers in full bloom – a beauty which is beyond speech.



Fig. 3. A miraculous scroll painting used as the unique stage-space for the performances.
(Source: Xinhuanet)

Using the human body to draw on the scroll is a unique performance in the opening ceremony. It has been considered as a distinctive performance art. In this form of art, human body is used as medium, and through a set of actions executed by artists or other participants, to produce artworks or perform for the purpose of art exhibition. Thus, performance art is also known as artistic action, or body art and happening. Basically, performance art entails four fundamental elements, namely time, space, the presence of the actors, and the interactions between the actors and the public. Sometimes it is taken as an avant-garde form of art in the category of visual arts. A number of performers in the opening ceremony use their bodies as the medium to dance out a set of seemingly casual but actually well-designed movements. On this occasion, the human body is used as ink, while the scroll is a piece of drawing paper. A set of freehand dance acted out by the performers, accompanied by music emitting from the string-plucked musical instrument, generates a richly expressive Chinese scroll painting, even though with relatively simple images such as river, mountain, sun, moon and other signifiers in natural world. These themes are commonly expressed in the traditional Chinese art. This performance art takes place in specific time and space – in the opening ceremony of Beijing Olympics and on a virtual scroll painting serving as stage-space of the performance inside the Beijing National Stadium, and with the support of a kind of so-called improvisation and a sense of aesthetics, its goal is to arouse reactions in the public. A scroll painting with images of sun and moon, mountains and rivers, is generated through the dancers' graceful movements and postures, showing a unique form of cultural representation. This also shows the creative use of the scroll painting in the event.

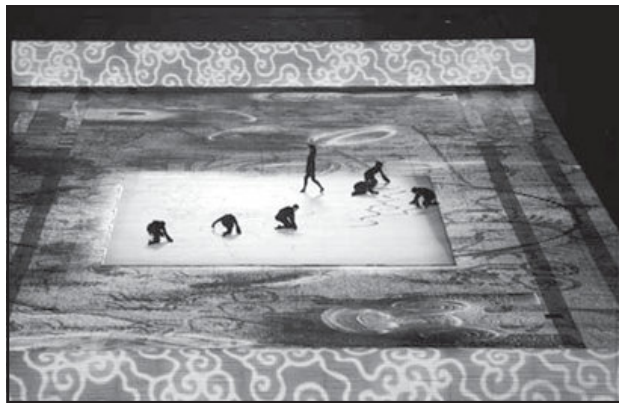


Fig. 4 Using the human body to draw as an distinctive form of performance art (Source: Google)

Peking Opera: The Quintessence of Chinese Culture

Peking opera or Beijing opera, once known as Ping opera, is one of the five major Chinese opera types. It emerged in Beijing in the mid-Qing dynasty (1636-1912) and became fully developed and won its popularity by the mid-19th century. Hui opera is the predecessor of Peking opera. Music of Peking opera can be divided into Xipi³ and Erhuang styles, accompanied by Huqin and gongs and drums. Peking opera is a comprehensive performing art, with an amalgamation of music, vocal performance, mime, dance, and acrobatics. It takes singing, chanting, doing or performing, fighting or martial arts, dancing as a whole to interpret a story through programmatic means. The roles of

the performers in the plays can be grouped into four major types: Sheng (the main male role), Dan (any female role), Jing (a male role) and Chou (a male clown role). The characters can be described as loyal and treacherous, beautiful and ugly, good and evil, etc. Each image is vivid and lifelike. Facial makeup, in which colouring is very crucial, is one of the most important techniques to be used for the purpose of describing the characters. Due to its popularity and influence, Peking opera has come to be regarded as the quintessence of Chinese culture, one of the cultural treasures of China. It is also known as the "national theatre" of China. In 2010, it was selected into the "List of Representative Works of Human Intangible Cultural Heritage".

The performance of Peking opera in the opening ceremony displays the art of facial makeup. Facial makeup is a unique art in Chinese opera. It uses the technique of exaggeration in artistic expressions to combine realism and symbolism together to present the appearances of curtain characters. Judged by the appearances, comprehensive characteristics such as the character's type, quality, personality, age, etc., can be suggested or even revealed. With the formation and development of opera, the art of facial makeup has become very colourful and magnificent. Based on the earlier studied conducted by some researchers, it is suggestive that all the faces of the characters in the display must be specially marked, and facial makeup must be outlined. In so doing, the characters need to highlight their faces in order to shape their images. The display of the art of facial makeup of Peking opera in the opening ceremony is based on a set of artistic, aesthetic as well as cultural values. Meanwhile, facial makeup is an important part of stage modeling in traditional Chinese opera, which will affect the overall effect of the stage art. The facial makeup of Peking opera has some artistic characteristics peculiar to itself, mainly including the following three points: decorative, procedural and symbolic, amongst which the symbolic one is distinctive. In the facial makeup of Peking opera, the use of the technique of symbolism is primarily reflected in two aspects, namely colour and shape.

Undoubtedly, colour is an essential constituent for the art of facial makeup in Peking opera. Admittedly, in the world every nation has its own understanding of and preference for colour. China holds sorts of perception and predilection of its own. The colouring in the facial makeup is closely bound up with the cultural traditions and the habits of life of the Chinese people. Every way of applying colours demonstrates specific implications. Colour rendering in facial makeup of Peking opera is extremely diversified. The frequently-used colours as red, yellow, blue, green, purple, black and white to express different symbolisms. To be specific, red colour, set as dominant tone, embodies the character's quality as loyalty, integrity, bravery, perseverance, etc.; when used as secondary colour, red is endowed with such symbolisms as to indicate the tragedy of the characters. Yellow usually symbolizes ferocity, cruelty, treachery, insidiousness, calculation. And other colours are endowed with some specific connotations. Characters in Peking opera are not only expressed through the tinting of facial makeup, but also revealed by the types of facial makeup. There are 36 types of facial makeup in Peking opera, specifically a variation of the full face and sub-types as upright three-tile face, pointed three-tile face, flowered three-tile face, and old or faded three-tile face. Generally, the types of Peking opera are marked out by three irregularly patches of colour to indicate the characters' characteristics, their roles in the plays, and many other aspects. The visual performance elements entailed in the performance of facial makeup exhibits the glamour of Peking opera which has been seen to follow other traditional arts in emphasizing meanings. The highest pursuit of the performance is to put beauty in every expression. Here lie the artistic and aesthetic characteristics of facial makeup art and it thus produces the cultural values of Peking opera.



Fig. 6. The performance of Peking opera on a movable stage in the opening ceremony.
(Source: Xinhuanet)



Fig. 5. A typical facial makeup in Peking opera (Source: Google)

Kunqu: An Ancient Form of Art of Traditional Chinese Opera

Kunqu, also known as Kunju, Kun opera or Kunqu opera, is an ancient form of Chinese opera. It evolved from the local tune of Kunshan in the end of Yuan dynasty and the early Ming dynasty in Kunshan County of Jiangsu province of China. It later became extremely popular across the country from the 16th to the 18th century. Research on historical materials reveals that, during the prosperous period of Tang dynasty, Kunqu was adored by people of all ranks and classes, from the nobles of the court to hawkers and pedlars in the street. The accompaniment instrument of Kunqu is mainly flute, supplemented by percussion instruments such as Sheng⁴, Xiao, Suona, Sanxian, Pipa, etc. The performance of Kunqu has its unique system and style. One of the features lies in the fact that the performance is full of lyrical expressions, every motion of the performers is tremendously delicate, and more strikingly the beauty of every movement can be achieved through the dancing and singing figures of the performers on the stage, demonstrating a beautiful stage performance form and pleasing to the eyes of the audience. Kunqu has been listed as one of the Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO since 2001. *The Peony Pavilion*⁵, the representative work of Tang Xianzu, is also the representative work taking love as the subject matter in Kunqu.



Fig. 7. The stills of *Peony Pavilion* in Kunqu.
(Source: ChinaOpera)

Performers in the opening ceremony of Beijing Olympics sing a famous song in Kunqu opera – that is “A Moonlit Night on the Spring River”. “A Moonlit Night on the Spring River” is a famous poem composed by Zhang Ruoxu, a Chinese poet of the early Tang dynasty. It has been taken as one of the most unique and influential Tang poems in the history of China, for it has been frequently used on different occasions in different periods. The poem depicts the intoxicating scenery of the moonlit Yangtze River in Spring Time. Images, such as flowers in full bloom, a bright moon shining in the sky and reflected in the water, constitute a fascinating picture of a night on Spring river. Wen Yiduo, an influential Chinese poet, spoke highly of the poem, calling it “the poem of all poems, the summit of all summits”⁶. The poem was adopted into Kunqu song by Zhou Luo⁷, a contemporary national first-level screenwriter in China. The adopted version is a typical classic work in terms of script, setting, programmatic music, performance, etc. In the performance of the opening ceremony, the performers sing the first four lines of the poem, which is translated into English as follow:

In Spring the river rises as high as sea,
And with the river's rise the moon uprises bright.
She follows the rolling waves for ten thousand li,
And where the river flows, there overflows her light.

The unique performance, combined with beautiful melody of lute and dizzying stage background, creates an emotional scene which is unforgettably impressive. Moreover, the costumes and makeups of the performers are perfectly matched with the simple but elegant colour tone of the stage. What a forgettable creation it is!



Fig. 8. The affectionate performance of Kunqu in the opening ceremony (Source: Xinhuanet)

Hanfu: An Iconic Symbol of Traditional Chinese Culture

A series of the so-called “Chinoiserie” presented in the opening ceremony of Beijing Olympics has brought a great shock to the world in stunning ways, and costume design is one of the highlights. Traditional Chinese costumes like Qipao⁸, Tangzhuang and Hanfu are used in many performances, amongst which the amazing presentation of the performers in Hanfu is particularly striking. Obviously, the use of the traditional Chinese costumes in the performances is an important way to augment the expressions of the traditional Chinese cultural elements in the opening ceremony, which aims to enhance the spread of Chinese national culture in the world. This is an important goal that the opening ceremony of Beijing Olympics attempts to achieve as a large cultural event.

Du Fu, also called Tu Fu, a Chinese poet of Tang dynasty, in one of his poems entitled “Ode to the Beautiful Ladies”, describes the delicate clothing style adopted by the high-ups. There are two lines in the poem written as “Glowing in the twilight of Spring are their luxurious silk robes; Embroidered with peacocks in gilded threads and unicorns in silvery yarn”, describing the elegant dress-styles pursued by the upper classes to reveal the extravagant and luxurious lifestyles led by them. At all events, the poem more or less shows that the ancients were very fastidious in their dress, and also indicates that traditional Chinese clothing possesses specific cultural connotations and aesthetic implications of their own, which over time have developed into a significant part of traditional Chinese culture. As a unique style of dressing, Hanfu has been highly recommended in a variety of occasions. As an English loanword, Hanfu refers to a type of Chinese dress worn by the Han people in China. Traditionally, Hanfu consists of a robe or shirt commonly worn as the upper outer garment and a pleated skirt as lower garment. It is a remarkably noteworthy fact that the Han Chinese clothing has exerted profound influence upon the traditional clothing of many neighbouring cultures, for example, the Japanese kimono⁹ and the Vietnamese Ao giao linh. In the history of China, the expression “Strong Han and Flourishing Tang” refers to the flourishing times that occurred in the Han and Tang dynasties. For this, Hanfu can be used as a spectacular exhibition of these splendid and glorious periods in history. Hanfu is the carrier of the traditional Chinese culture. The presentation of gorgeous Han costumes, along with a large cast of performers, superb stage decoration, and accompanied by melodious classic music, represents the scenes of prosperity in Han and Tang dynasties on the stage, and at the meantime echoes the prosperous chapter of today’s society. Therefore, it has come to a conclusion that the performance of Hanfu in the opening ceremony is a means that China takes the Beijing Olympics as an important opportunity to showcase the world and carry forward the rich and profound traditional culture of the nation.



Fig. 9. The brightly-coloured Hanfu lighting up the atmosphere of the scene.
(Source: Xinhuanet)

Conclusion

Based on the above analysis, this paper holds a view that the 2008 Beijing Olympics is not only a spectacular event in sports, but also a grand cultural gala aiming to display traditional Chinese culture. The Beijing National Stadium is undeniably a modern marvel, serving as the main venue of the Beijing Olympics. The construction of the space of the Stadium reflects the spatial concepts of mega events organized by modern society. The production of space lays emphasis on the selection of materials, the design of the architecture, spatial architectonics, etc., which aims to pursue the practical as well as aesthetic values of the spaces. Moreover, only when various tools and instruments, in particular a variety of cutting-edge technologies, are employed, can the creation of an ideal stage-space for the artistic performances in the opening ceremony become possible, and this subsequently provides the possibilities for the presentations of a series of traditional Chinese cultural elements: firstly, a virtual scroll painting, made of high technological content and used as the central stage of the performances, itself stands for the traditional Chinese scroll painting on the one hand, and on the other it is projected with a stream of traditional Chinese cultural symbols like ceramics, tea, etc.; secondly, the performance of the facial makeup of Peking opera provides another perspective for the world to know more about the traditional Chinese culture, since Peking opera is the quintessence of Chinese culture and one of the most precious cultural treasures of China; moreover, Kunqu opera is another cultural heritage of the Chinese nation – with its popularity and influence it helps to open up a new window for the world to peep at the rich and profound cultural background and achievement of the Chinese people; last but not the least, traditional costumes serve as the carriers of the traditional Chinese culture, and Hanfu taken as the representative of these unique cultural symbols, fully demonstrates an alternative aspect of the oriental culture which is characterized by the quality of gentleness and delicacy – female performers in red colour Hanfu in the performance truly impresses the world with the beauty and charming of the oriental women and this constitutes an important aspect of traditional Chinese culture. All in all, China, as an emerging superpower, tries to take this epoch-making opportunity to spread and carry forward its rich and brilliant traditional culture, and the successful holding of the Games has showed its determination and perseverance in doing the same.

Notes

- ¹ See Wikipedia. ETFE is a shortened form of Ethylene tetrafluoroethylene, referring to a fluorine-based plastic. The purpose of designing it is to resist corrosion under radical temperature. While PTFE is the abbreviation of Polytetrafluoroethylene, which is a synthetic fluoropolymer of tetrafluoroethylene that is widely applied in a variety of occasions.
- ² See ZentralDesigns on Google: <https://zentraldesigns.com/products/copy-of-hollowed-out-chinese-traditional-auspicious-clouds-sterling-silver-ring>. In traditional Chinese culture, "Auspicious Clouds" is given metaphorical sense, representing a beautiful symbol of endless luck. "Auspicious Clouds", pronounced in Chinese Pinyin as "xiangyun", refers to the heavens and also good luck, for the Chinese word for cloud is pronounced the same as yun meaning "luck" or "fortune".
- ³ See Wikipedia. Xipi, literally meaning "Skin Puppet Show", refers to the puppet show that originated in Shaanxi province. In the context of Peking opera, Xipi refers to the musical form in singing, which is believed to be derived from the historic Qinqiang by some scholars while others believe it was retained from Kunqu. Erhuang is a musical form in Peking opera. Some Scholars believe that Erhuang evolves from the blowing tunes. It is one of the accents in opera. Distinct from Xipi, the musical form of Erhuang generally sounds more calmly stable and more concise and serious.
- ⁴ See Wikipedia. The Sheng is a Chinese mouth-blown free reed instrument consisting of vertical pipes. The Xiao is a Chinese vertical end-blown flute which is generally made of bamboo. The Suona, also called laba or haidi, is a Chinese double-reeded horn. The Sanxian, literally translated "three strings", is a Chinese lute – a three-stringed fretless plucked musical instrument. The Pipa is a traditional string-plucked instrument in East Asia, which has more than 2000 years history.
- ⁵ See Wikipedia. *The Peony Pavilion*, also named *The Return of Soul at the Peony Pavilion*, is a romantic play written in 1598 by Tang Xianzu, a playwright in Ming dynasty.
- ⁶ See *Fengsao Guodu* written by Ma Xiaodong. The book covers areas of literature, history, art, language, national conditions, places of interest, etc. In each area, 100 topics are selected for the purpose of introducing the basic overview of Chinese culture in a plain and easily understandable way and with lively writing.
- ⁷ Zhou Luo, born in 1981, is a young screenwriter in China. Zhou Luo has won many a China's Top Screenwriter Award, such as China Theatre Awards, Cao Yu Script Award, etc. She is the youngest to receive these prizes.
- ⁸ See Wikipedia. Qipao, also known as Cheongsam, is a type of traditional dress of Manchu origin. It is normally a high-necked and tight-fitting dress worn by women. The English word "Tangzhuang" is sometimes translated as a tang suit or jacket. It is a kind of Chinese jacket once worn by Manchu horseman. A straight collar is characteristic of this type of costume.
- ⁹ See Wikipedia. The kimono, literally meaning "thing to wear", is a kind of traditional Japanese clothing and taken as the national dress of Japan. It is a T-shaped, wrapped-front dress with square sleeves and a rectangular body. The ao giao linh, literally translated as "cross-collared robe", was a type of traditional garment worn by the Vietnamese before the 19th century.

Works Cited

- "ao yun hui kai mu shi wen hua jie du – chong fen ti xian zhong guo wen hua de zi xin (The Interpretation of Culture in the Opening Ceremony of Beijing Olympics Fully Demonstrates the Cultural Confidence of the Chinese Nation)." *SOHU.com*, 15 Aug. 2008, news.sohu.com/20080815/n258876193.shtml. Accessed 27 Jan. 2021.
- Bachelard, Gaston. *The Poetics of Space* (1969). Translated by Maria Jolas, Beacon Press, 1994.
- "Beijing National Stadium." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 30 Dec. 2020, en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Beijing_National_Stadium&oldid=997270620. Accessed 23 Jan. 2021.

- Bruno, Giuliana. "Visual Studies: Four Takes on Spatial Turns." *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, vol. 65, no. 1, 2006, pp. 23–24. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/25068236. Accessed 27 Jan. 2021.
- Certeau, Michel de. *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984). E-book, translated by Steven Rendall, University of California Press, 2002.
- Ding, Bo. "kai mu shi deng guang zong she ji shi sha xiao lan – guang ying po mo shi jie zhi zui (Sha Xiaolan, the Chief Designer of Lighting in the Opening Ceremony: China is the Number One in the World in Dealing with Light and Shadow and in Splashing Ink)." *SOHU.com*, 9 Aug. 2008, 2008.sohu.com/20080809/n258702477.shtml. Accessed 22 Jan. 2021.
- Doorley, Scott, and Scott Witthoft. *Make Space: How to Set the Stage for Creative Collaboration*. Wiley, 2012.
- "er ling ling ba nian ao yun hui kai mu shi – shi jie kan jian de zhong guo yuan su (The Opening Ceremony of the 2008 Beijing Olympics: The Chinese Elements that the World Can See)." *ifeng.com*, 8 Aug. 2008, news.ifeng.com/special/olympicsculture/. Accessed 27 Jan. 2021.
- "Full Opening Ceremony from Beijing Olympics." *YouTube*, uploaded by Throwback Thursday, 8 Aug. 2019, www.youtube.com/watch?v=bufV3EgyPGU&t=1531s&ab_channel=Olympic. Accessed 23 Jan. 2021.
- Goodchild, Michael F., and Donald G. Janelle. "Toward Critical Spatial Thinking in the Social Sciences and Humanities." *GeoJournal*, vol. 75, no. 1, 2010, pp. 3–13. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/41148380. Accessed 27 Jan. 2021.
- Hall, Stuart. "Introduction." *REPRESENTATION: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* (The Open University, 1997), edited by Stuart Hall, SAGE Publications, 2009, pp. 1–11.
- Hu, Miaosheng. *yue du kong jian – wu tai she ji mei xue* (Reading Spaces: Aesthetics of Stage Design). Shanghai Literature and Art Publishing House, 2002.
- Lefebvre, Henri. *The Production of Space* (1974). Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith, Blackwell, 1991.
- Li, Han. "bei jing ao yun hui dan sheng ji – zhi hui he han shui ning ju zhong hua wen ming (The Making of the Opening Ceremony of the Beijing Olympics: Wisdom and Painstaking Condense into Chinese Civilization)." *SOHU.com*, 9 Aug. 2008, 2008.sohu.com/20080809/n258700832.shtml. Accessed 22 Jan. 2021.
- Longhurst, Brian, et. al. *Introducing Cultural Studies*. 2nd ed., Pearson Education, 2008.
- Plastow, Jane. "Introduction." *Theatre Matters: Performance and Culture on the World Stage*, edited by Richard Boon and Jane Plastow, Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. 1–10.
- Presner, Todd. "Digital Geographies: Berlin in the Ages of New Media." *Spatial Turns: Space, Place, and Mobility in German Literary and Visual Culture*, edited by Jaimey Fisher and Barnara Mennel, Rodopi, 2010, pp. 446–69.
- Sack, Robert David. *Conception of Space in Social Thought: A Geographic Perspective*. Macmillan Press, 1980.
- Turner, Bryan S. "The Sociology of the Body." *The New Blackwell Companion to Social Theory*, edited by Bryan S. Turner, Wiley-Blackwell, 2008, pp. 513–32.
- Wang, Min'an. *Shen ti, kong jian yu hou xian dai xing* (Body, Space and Postmodernity). Jiangsu People's Publishing House, 2005.
- Warf, Barney, and Santa Arias. "Introduction: The Reinsertion of Space in the Humanities and Social Society." *The Spatial Turn: Interdisciplinary Perspective*, edited by Barney Warf and Santa Arias, Routledge, 2009, pp. 1–10.
- Yang, Chuangjian, and Xue Li. "bei jing ao yun hui kai mu shi zhong guo chuan tong wen hua tan xi (Exploring the Traditional Chinese Culture in the Opening Ceremony of Beijing Olympics)." *Movie Review*, no. 9, 2009, p. 76. CNKI, kns.cnki.net/kcms/detail/detail.aspx?dbcode=CJFD&dbname=CJFD2009&filename=DYPJ200909057&v=13boDwn4BIOXfj12UHSSML8CshXLUAZ7c4OHwI8TQnMEeEfLZsFv7TX5ALN%25mmd2BZVh4.
- Zevi, Bruno. *Architecture as Space: How to Look at Architecture* (1974). Translated by Milton Gendel, edited by Joseph A. Barry, Da Capo Press, 1993.

Reimagining the Notion of Imagination: A Kantian Perspective

PRASHANT KUMAR

Human beings are active receivers of external stimuli/representations and at the same time they are active builders of new images and concepts through the external stimuli/representations. Active receiver of external stimuli shows the participation of the agent in order to collect a finite set of stimuli out of infinite set of stimuli/representations. The finite set of stimuli/representations shows the relevance of them in act of experiencing, that is, an active cognitive being is inclined to grasp a particular object. The representations or stimuli itself do not have any faculty to unite themselves and can present themselves as a self-woven concept, hence they depend on some other faculty which can synthesize them. The “other faculty” is called as “Imagination” by Kant. In the first section, the paper will engage with the role of Imagination in Kant’s epistemological enquiry and show the reciprocal relationship between imagination and faculty of understanding. In the second section, it will offer a general role of imagination¹ in the aesthetic experience where imagination works to explore many possibilities and relation of these possibilities in creation of a piece of art. It also offers a continuation of the role(s) of imagination from epistemic enquiry to Aesthetic creation, which, in turn, will broaden up the definition of imagination and fill the gap between epistemic and aesthetic explanation.

I

In the first critique, Kant responds to the position propounded by the skeptic philosopher, David Hume, that human subjects passively receive impressions and thus is devoid of any spontaneity. Contrary to Hume, Kant establishes the spontaneity in the mind to attain any sort of knowledge after the synthesis of the sense data. He states,

“Our knowledge springs from the two fundamental sources of the mind. The first is the capacity of receiving representations; the second is the power of knowing an object through representation.”²

The notion of “spontaneity” not only demonstrates the intimate and immediate relationship between subject and object but also brings Copernican revolution where mind takes the central place in order to acquire knowledge. It shows that we, minds of human beings, approach to objects. With the external stimuli/representations, we ultimately come to know about them.

The question still remains unanswered – what makes us to experience the object lying outside in the world? Kant suggests that human beings have pure sensuous intuitions “space” and “time” which allows us to experience things. In order to explicate it further, he delineates that “time and space, taken together, are the pure forms of sensible intuitions, so are what make a synthetic *a priori* propositions possible.”³ One may infer that Kant

exhibits space and time the very first foundation to have any representation of the object. He further writes,

"Space and Time contain a manifold of pure a priori intuition, but at a same time, are the conditions of the receptivity of mind- conditions under which alone it can receive representations of objects"⁴

The appearances never come to us as a unified picture. They always come to us separately and individually. They come to us in a large scale of unstructured *sensa and images*.⁵ Kant further urges,

"Since every appearance contain a manifold, and since different perception therefore occur in mind separately and singly, a combination of them, such as they cannot have itself, is demanded"⁶.

"Combination" here can be termed as synthesis, as Kant wields. So, it becomes imperative to understand what Kant means by synthesis. Kant very straightforwardly demonstrates that if "this manifold of appearances is to be known, the spontaneity of our thought must be required that it must be directed through in a certain way and connected"⁷. He further explains,

"By *synthesis* I understand the act of putting different representations together, and of grasping what is manifold in them in one [act of] knowledge."⁸

Let me explicate it with a simple example. A girl, G, perceives a street play in the afternoon. This afternoon is quite noisy and crowded. The play itself emits many visual senses and images, and at the same time it also produces numbers of audio *sensa*. All these senses, audio and visual, are not similar in quality. In sort, they are not alike. These noises occurred along with other simultaneous sounds in the auditory field and the visual *sensa along with other color-expanes* in the visual field. Now, an active cognitive being first discriminates some *sensa* from other *sensa* in every field; auditory and visual field. When one is aware of one kind of *sensum* it calls up the associated *sensa* of the other kinds, and so on. This is how the process of synthesis occurs in Kantian epistemology. Through the process, the cognitive being receives one kind of unified sense experience in the form of image that is categorically different from simply sense data and stimuli. Once the cognitive being forms the unified image, multiple categories of understanding will be applied to discern the object. Now, they are ready to be conceptualized. Kant may call it "empirical synthesis"⁹.

Sensa and images themselves do not have any faculty from which they can unite themselves. So, there must be a faculty exists within our mind that can synthesize different sorts of *sensa* and impressions to form a unified picture. Kant titles this faculty "Imagination"¹⁰. Kant further clearly describes,

"Synthesis, in general, as we shall hereafter see, is the mere result of the power of imagination, a blind but indispensable function of the soul, without which we should have no knowledge whatsoever, but of which we are scarcely ever conscious."¹¹

Imagination functions as the unifier of the all the appearances, *sensa* and images. Before the sense data encounters the faculty of imagination, objects are just there, unknown to the knower. Imagination distinguishes it from other sense data and brings them together to make a platform to form a new knowledge of the particular object. This is the first condition in order to get knowledge, as Kant argues. Therefore, imagination plays a fundamental role in Kantian epistemology.

A close look at the usage of 'blind function of soul', one can infer that Kant at least have two points in his mind. First, in order to synthesize all the appearances, imagination is neither rule guided, nor law governed. Or at least, Kant does not have any intention to make any rule for functioning of imagination. So, it can freely officiate. Another reason is that our experiences happen, in Kant's view, in a very systematic and categorical way. In order to have such systematic and seamless experience, imagination has to perform in a particular manner to bring all the diverse impressions and images. It seems that imagination works through certain inner systematic scheme for which imagination itself is not conscious of. Not being conscious means, he is blind to follow other sort of synthesis which does not necessary represent the same object, hallucination, for instance. To explain synthesis Kant, further, says,

"Synthesis of manifold is what first gives rise to knowledge, and therefore in need of analysis. Still the synthesis is that which gathers the element for knowledge and unites them to form certain content. *It is to synthesis, therefore, that we must direct our attention, if we would determine the first origin of our knowledge*". (emphasis added)

Faculty of understanding through which concepts can be applied to intuitions in the form of thoughts¹² can only become functioning when imagination makes all the manifolds unite and are presented to faculty of understanding. This shows that faculty of imagination officiates in the very first, primal level in order to form a knowledge. This does not only answer the objection¹³ raised by Zizek but also establishes the autonomy of imagination in terms of its functioning.

Kant calls activity of imagination as an "apprehension". The faculty of imagination synthesizes in the spontaneous and immediate manner without following any pre-given principle. It can be well observed after analyzing the distinction between productive and reproductive imagination. Productive imagination is spontaneous and a priori (the imagination is itself a faculty of a priori synthesis; we assign to it the title, productive synthesis¹⁴). On the other hand, reproductive imagination is subject to the empirical laws like of association, which he calls is "association of representations". Kant dismisses the reproductive imagination by saying that it does not falls in the domain of transcendental philosophy but of psychology. With this line of thought, he also decries the view of Hume on imagination where he allows imagination to associate the impressions only in order to form complex ideas.

If the association of apprehension does not have any objective reality, then it would be impossible for imagination to synthesize all the appearances. It becomes very accidental for appearances to come and unite. So, there must be an objective ground which Kant terms as "affinity"¹⁵. Affinity also shows the belongingness of the knowledge to a particular experiencer who is in the process of understanding the object. "The objective unity of all empirical impressions of the object in one consciousness, that of the original apperception, is thus the necessary condition of all possible perceptions"¹⁶. "The affinity of all appearances is a necessary consequence of a synthesis in imagination which is grounded a priori on rules."¹⁷

Imagination also functions to maintain a relationship between faculty of sensibility and faculty of understanding. In this sense, after unifying all the sensa and impressions, it sends them to the particular categories. The process is known as schematization. Kant specifically takes up the problem of relation between the two faculties in the chapter on *Schematism*, where he argues that there must be a "third" category which is homogeneous to the faculty of understanding on the one hand and the faculty of sensibility on the

other and makes possible the employment of the former into the latter. Kant entitles this faculty “Transcendental schema”. It is argued that imagination is the faculty which solves Kant’s biggest problem to deal with the multiple relationships of these faculties. From this line of thought, it would not be wrong to call imagination as a “mediator” and this particular function “the principle of mediation”. Imagination does work alone but it does not discount the fact that it cannot take any assistance from other pure intuitions. It takes enough assistance from the inner intuition, time. While dealing with imagination, one can also sense the existence of space and time. Kant writes,

“The (space and time) ... cannot be apprehended, viz., taken up into the empirical consciousness except through that synthesis of the manifold whereby the representations of the determinate space or time are generated.”¹⁸

Let us recollect what we have discussed in the earlier paragraphs in order to form a basic understanding of the notion of imagination in Kantian philosophy. Imagination officiates to assemble all the bare appearances and send them to the particular categories with the help of inner sensuous intuitions, that is, time. It establishes the autonomy of imagination and shows its role as a mediator among faculties. However, there are certain serious second order questions which are completely ignored in the first part of discussion in Kant. Let us pen down them first.

Can the contents of understanding itself be any object for further experiences? More concretely – can concept be an object of further synthesization in order to form a new concept? Can term “blind” be taken into more seriously in order to broaden up the understanding of imagination? In order to explain all these questions, let us take an example. Person P is sitting in front of her table and reading Kant’s critique of pure reason. She reads all the words of its title, but she seems a bit confused about the usage of “reason”. She reads “reason” because of her visual field. It is recognized as written in the book, but “reason” as a concept becomes an object for further analysis, namely, how it is used. It implies that an impression in the mind can be used for further analysis. In this case, “blind” in association with imagination seems very significant as it does not follow any prior rule to synthesize. Thus, it provides us the possibility to put these concepts again in different categories to make a blueprint of all possible arrangements of *sensa* and images. From that perspective, it works as reciprocal with understanding.

II

“Here I sit, making men
In my images,
A race which shall be like me,
To suffer, to weep,
To enjoy and be glad,
And to ignore you,
As I do”¹⁹

These lines of the poem, indubitably, are the result of Goethe’s creative imagination. It might occur to many to understand the activity of writing a poetry; what actually goes in the mind of a poet when she pens down the beautiful lines of a poetry? The intention to use “activity” is to say that imagination itself is a kind of action that Daya Krishna rightly pointed out. “Imagination is an integral part of action.”²⁰ It seems that we can agree to Daya Krishna to a certain limit, but we must question the limits he sets up for imagination.

Here, imagination plays a reverse activity. Being a part of an action, not only it produces one sort of action, but it also facilitates another action. For another action, it just plays a role as stimulus, as a trigger to move something which can be physical or mental in nature. Discerning the nature of the activity, it is not only imaginative but also contains a desire to go beyond this, to go beyond the absurdity²¹ of the pre-given world. It seems to us that the desire to go beyond assists us to consider "concept" as a mere representation in its primal level for imagination to develop a new concept. The desire can only happen if and only if one has some primary knowledge of a particular concept as Naiyayikas put it very clearly in their epistemic enquiry. So, unless and until we don't have any knowledge of object, it cannot be object of our desire. Thus, in any aesthetic creation, sense data and concepts, can be treated as a mere representation for the imagination to further develop new concepts.

What is the current situation of humans, at least, in epistemic sense? Is it not the current concept which human establishes in order to understand the world and play with it? This is the world; world with full of concepts, full of the values, functions attached to a particular object, at least in our epistemic practicality. Other than this, the actual world allows us to brood over diverse possibilities to replace the prevalent things, concepts and values. The possibility is mere a result of imagination. In Aesthetics, these possibilities are termed as non-conceptual because most of the aesthetic concepts are related to "unshared" concepts. An artist imagines a new concept which she employs in her different works of art, is also unshared in terms of its objectivity. Therefore, the observer can also put her imagination into works and can feel it, sense it. If the concept is only to be felt, to be sensed, and to determine it by some values would be an injustice to it as it will prioritize the concept over and above the work of art. Hence, it does not qualify as a conceptual concept.

However, in crucial circumstances, through a passionate aesthetic enquiry, desirous human beings always try to go beyond the pre-given circumstances. This seems the reason for Fritz Kaufmann to say – "it is imagination through which man lives in devising new possibilities of life and world, transcending each state and dissatisfied even with satisfactions that mark relapse inertia of patterned".²² The crucial role of imagination, here, boils down to devise diverse possibilities of life and world, epistemologically and aesthetically. In this sense Imagination is deemed to show the further possibilities of life-world. Daya Krishna used it in his epistemic enquiry of the society. He explicitly argues that a society which has more utopias with the *possible* consequences is better society, at least, in its future. In this line of thought, the preferable task of imagination is to discover the new possibilities in society, which is nothing but different modes of synthesis of representations, that is, *sensa* images and *concepts*. Thus, it displays the role of imagination nothing but a unifier of representations or manifolds.

Kant is more interested in appreciation of art rather than in creation of art. So, it turns out as a judgment of beauty. In this particular context, Kant says, "When we make such judgments, our imagination and our understanding are in "free play"²³. Free play, one can argue, denotes to synthesizing the representations without having any pre-norms or rule. Here, the role of productive imagination is not merely an association of ideas/impressions/representations but of forming new worlds without any kind of concept attached to it. The second reason might be at conceptual level; imagination may lose his values and becomes mere a part of reason. This comes very close to Coleridge notion of imagination where he distinguishes two types of imagination – primary and secondary

and argues that they are identical in terms of agency but differs in terms of activity and degrees. He focuses more on the subjective power of creativity, and places artists at the center. It is relevant in the sense that in epistemic enquiry imagination works in very primal level but in aesthetics its degree of functioning increases and works as “creative power”. From this perspective, it comes very close to Kant’s own explanation “a blind but indispensable function of soul” but differs only in its degrees. So, from the earlier discussion, it is quite clear that the notions of imagination in Kant, are not two different concepts in his critiques. They function similarly but differ in the degrees of its functioning. Kant never tries to bind the real nature of imagination but put a particular function in his epistemic enquiry, which gets extended in his third critique.

Kant’s way of dealing with imagination in his epistemic enquiry is quite different from the traditional way(s) of engaging with it. One reason is that imagination was not in a fashion to take it as an epistemic faculty. It was Hume who introduced it. And following Hume, Kant just attached a new function to the imagination and differentiate himself from Hume. To understand the notion(s) of imagination differently and assigning its roles in the epistemic inquiry contrasted to the aesthetic inquiry would be a sheer mistake. Instead of comprehending the two notions of imagination different in kinds, the present paper arrayed it in different degrees. In order to understand the real intention of Kant, the usages of “free play” and “blind” must be further analyzed in order to show the coherence in the two understandings of imagination.

Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

Notes

¹ There are positive and negative roles of imagination, but the paper confines itself only to positive role of imagination. Its negative aspect is raised by Hegel in his book *Janaer Real philosophie*.

² Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, translated by, K. Smith, p. 92

³ Ibid, Page no. 80

⁴ Ibid, Pg., 111

⁵ Broad, C.D. *Kant an Introduction*, p. 84

⁶ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, translated by, K. Smith, p. 144

⁷ Ibid, p. 111

⁸ Ibid, p. 111

⁹ Broad, C.D. *Kant an Introduction*, p. 84

¹⁰ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, translated by, K. Smith, p. 144

¹¹ Ibid, p. 112

¹² Ibid, p. 65

¹³ Objection is raised in his book, *The Ticklish subject*, p. 29

¹⁴ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, translated by, K. Smith, p. 145

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 145

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 145

¹⁷ Ibid, p.145

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 145

¹⁹ Nietzsche, Friedrich, *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 48

²⁰ Daya Krishna, *Civilization*, p. 89

²¹ Kant used this term in his critique of judgment in order to show the artist creation. The absurdity always pushes the experiencer to look beyond, to become uncomfortable with what is given.

²² Fritz Kaufmann and Fritz Heider. "On Imagination", p. 370

²³ Sheppard, Anna. "The role of Imagination in Aesthetic Experience", p. 38

Works Cited

Broad, C.D. *Kant an Introduction*, London: Cambridge University Press, 1978.

Gibbons, Sarah L. *Kant's Theory of Imagination*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994.

Heidegger, Martin. *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* Translated by Richard Taft, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997.

Hume, Robert D. "Kant and Coleridge on Imagination", *The journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol, 28, No. 4, Wiley, 1970.

Kant, Immanuel. *The Critique of Pure Reason* Translated by K. Smith, New Delhi: Khosla Publishing House, 1999.

Kaufmann, Fritz. and Heider, Fritz. "On Imagination", *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (March, 1947), pp. 369-375.

Krishna, Daya. *Civilization: Nostalgia and Utopia*, Shimla: Sage Publication, 2012.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Birth of Tragedy*, London: Penguin Classics, 2003.

Sheppard, Anne. "The Role of Imagination in Aesthetic Experience", *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, Vol. 25, No. 4, 25th Anniversary Issue, University of Illinois Press, 1991.

Zizek, Slavoj. *The Ticklish Subject*, London: Verso, 1999.

Is it Easy to Forget Allama Iqbal? A Search for Progressive Religion and Recrudescence of Reason

MONICA CHAUDHARY

*Ye Hikmat-e-Malkooti, Ye Ilm-e-Lahooti Haram Ke Dard Ka Darman Nahin To Kuch Bhi Nahin.*¹

— Allama Iqbal (1877-1938)

In different contexts confronted with challenges posed by traditional minds, men with broader vision have tried to overcome it through inventory means of various kinds. Longing to move towards a better age has been at the heart of all human ages starting from the Greek civilization and cutting across through all other civilizations that followed. In Europe, this craving to become progressive took off during the reformation and produced an impressionable effect over all disciplines that got nurtured as well as improvised. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, science and religion gave rise to a tumultuous debate as to what sort of reality is more plausible to the man. This debate carried itself right into the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in which philosophers as well as poets attempted to penetrate through the veil which they thought was necessary to do.

Within these philosophical branches the age of enlightenment is one of the most influential periods. In this age, one name which became a central attraction is that of Immanuel Kant who ventured to polish the very idea of enlightenment in order to get away from the fundamental attributions that had governed the scene prior to his arrival. He establishes the supremacy of reason in order to get his generations going on the path of progress; in doing so he compressed concepts like courage and freedom which to his mind are essential components of every being. Kant urged to move out of the “tutelage” that discourages one from using our rationale.² He advocated freedom of each and every individual that comprises not only of physical but also intellectual freedom which could be achieved only by channelizing the courage. In a similar vein, Iqbal advocated the reconstruction of religion but unlike Kant, religion is of crucial import to his theory and philosophy. At the same time, he prescribes a course of action to attain the objectives and it is not merely at the level of abstraction that his theory exists. He envisions a brand new empowered and intellectually aware community of Muslims by aiming at a holistic development of the human kind. Iqbal transcends Pakistan and his poetry reaches beyond the realm of aesthetic pleasure. But this process turns out not as simple as he probably might have thought, since all that he had envisioned could not fall into place even in a gradual manner. This paper, therefore, is an attempt to highlight the very complications which got ignored in Kant’s approach mainly towards freedom from orthodox doctrines and are subsequently addressed by Iqbal. It also investigates the role of Iqbal in instrumentalizing the relevance of reason within the realm of religion. For analysis, I

shall be taking into consideration Iqbal's poetry and Kant's 1784 seminal essay, "What is Enlightenment?", wherein he has explicitly dealt with the mechanism of assigning the reason complete autonomy.

The purpose is to hint at the limitation that this project faces when it thinks of reason as being the true representative of the human nature. To my mind, there is a fundamental miscalculation here because historically as well as philosophically speaking, one cannot create a model of enlightenment by excluding morals which belong to the sphere of emotion as well as religion. The project of Enlightenment which required and which should have aimed at the development of entire human race, remains incomplete without the inclusion of religion in its entirety. History shows that most of the crisis that mankind has got into has largely been through the distorted view of religion and in the absence of an intellectual who could reinterpret this distorted version to the people.³ As a result, the situation has always become even worse. In such a scenario, arrival of an enlightened age will be almost next to impossible since the majority of the population would continue to live in the world of deception and without knowing about any of the deceitful forces. By assuming a neglectful attitude towards realms of emotions and religious patterns, Kant ends up somewhere along the path which is a dimly lit one.

As a representational framework, Kant's idea of enlightenment presupposes equal moral worth of each and every individual without much of a real justification. He epitomizes this moral worth for the liberation of the human consciousness. Scholars have argued that this kind of mechanism gets very close to the pragmatic predicament, as it encourages a logical pushing up to a certain degree. I speculate, there is a paradox here because this could be said after all that by departing from the religion and labeling it as a private affair, one cannot encapsulate fully the sensibilities associated with the very idea of enlightenment or development. If boundaries of the reason are pushed to the edges, it might lead one to take a glimpse into the morality as a phenomenon but it cannot bring down the falsities which have been damaging the human progress nearly forever. Iqbal opines in "Bal-e-Jibril"-030-(Gabriels Wing), "Kya Sufi-O-Mullah Ko Khabar Mere Junoon Ki, Un Ka Sar-e-Daman Bhi Abhi Chaak Nahin Hai" (What do these priests know about my passion and craze, even the corner of their cloth is not yet torn) ("Allama Iqbal Poetry"). Iqbal here expresses anguish over the priests, as they have hijacked the real Islam and reproduced a distorted and mutated version of the Islam before the world.

For instance, in the subcontinent political matters are thought of as principles which lay a great deal outside from the common man's grasp. This view is made even firmer by the politicians, as they did not want to break out of the box to solve the political tensions but rather choosing to keep to themselves and creating a political hierarchy of some sort. It was only after 1935, when Progressive Writers Movement knocked at the locked political door of the subcontinent, that issues which were political in nature became somewhat comprehensible to the common man. Writers like Sadat Hasan Manto took it upon themselves to blend the existential with the personal so much so that all other discursive theories which had kept the political sensibilities out of the ordinary realm seemed inferior. The idea here is to hint at the approach that has in view all the principal spheres of life in order to create a developed society in the long run. It follows, that if humans technologically move ahead or stumble upon the discoveries in the scientific realm and at the same time get intimidated by the structures of religion which is to say that they do not add anything to this sphere but leave it where it was three thousand years ago and only replace the previous labels with some new ones, nothing is likely to happen.

At the outset, such a critical issue which has manifested itself in the very practice of the people cannot be left untouched and if it is left so then dreams about the complete development cannot be realized. The alertness and awareness of the reinterpretation of the religion need to be predominant as far as the ambition to bring about change is concerned. The repressive tools of the belief system which are settled in the shared imagining of the people ought to be pointed out. In other words, the falsities present in the religious framework might be termed as a structural weakness which ought to be cured in as daring a manner as possible. As in the context of the progressive writers who remained masterful at their craft and did not give it up before they appealed and moved the understanding of the middle class of the subcontinent.

One of the useful ways in which this consistent attitude towards religion can be resolved would be through establishing a kind of milieu where logic and emotion, physics and metaphysics exist in an exemplary harmony. The idea is to explore the human consciousness with a wholeness which is unavailable otherwise. This exercise can lead humans and mainly the intellectual who undertakes it to absorb what Nietzsche terms as "perspectivism". That is, to look at human nature from all angles to come to a critically formed judgment. In such a scenario, imagination and reason would complement each other and mysterious things like religion would start taking coherent forms and shapes. Such modified shapes would then open a true passage of joy.

To illustrate this point further, two examples one from the west and other from the east should be able to suffice. Martin Luther's negation of some of the dubious and ill-formed laws in the catholic set of principles made it possible for him to inject ingenuity into the realm which for a long time is perceived as permanent and not subject to change. It is indeed a democratizing project as he made the rigid principles of the Catholic Church congenial to the common man. His venture to translate Bible into regional languages made it impossible for the mediators to control and sustain their power who had been willfully doing so for many centuries. Scriptures became accessible to people and gave rise to possibilities of multiple interpretations.

Something of the similar nature happened in the early twentieth century South Asian Philosophy, when "poet of the east" (Shair-e-Maschrik), Allama Iqbal (1877-1938) quite openly in his work advocated the principles which to his mind are necessary for the religion of Islam in order to become compatible with the modern man. He rejected the notion of injustice which is perpetrated by the mediators of Islamic belief system. His modern interpretations suggest that concepts like secularism and democracy are an integral part of the Islamic and Quranic teachings. Not only such practices install fear in the minds of people, it offers a skewed understanding of religion, especially Islam. Islam as a religion is fundamentally based on the concepts of *Jadidiyat* (modernity) and *Ishtehadi soch* (progressive thinking). There are many verses in Quran advocating the use of one's rationale, cognition and decisive thinking. He criticizes the ideas which are made popular by one of the sects of the fundamentalists which is to focus on the life hereafter and not to be affected by the worldly affairs. The note below is a reflection of Iqbal's understanding of the fundamentalists in Islam:

I know the *Ulama* of Islam claim finality for the popular school of Muslim Law. For fear of ... disintegration the conservative thinkers of Islam focused all their efforts on the one point of preserving a uniform social life for the people by a jealous exclusion of all innovations in the law of Shariat as expounded by the early doctors of Islam ... Since things have changed and the world of Islam is today confronted and affected by new forces set free by the extraordinary development of human thought in all directions, I see

no reason why this attitude (of the *Ulama*) should be maintained any longer...*The claim of the present generation of Muslim liberals to re-interpret the foundational legal principles, in the light of their own experience and altered conditions of modern life, is in my opinion, perfectly justified. The teaching of the Quran that life is a process of progressive creation necessitates that each generation, guided but unhampered by the work of its predecessors, should be permitted to solve its own problems*". (qtd. in Hillier and Koshul 8)

His efforts had shocking effects over the fundamentalists of his time who were absolutely not prepared for such a reconfiguration of the system which they had been pronouncing as perfect and unchangeable. Like Luther, he had to face the cruelest criticisms one of which is to call his philosophy, non-religious. In fact, to this day many of his poems cannot be put on air on radio or TV in Pakistan as the authorities feel less confident for the reception that those poems might initiate.

The Iqbalian model, had a revolutionizing effect in some of the countries of the Middle East and also within Europe. By penetrating into the religious veil, both Iqbal and Luther succeeded in compelling the fundamental religious doctrines to go through a major transformation which is appropriately captured in one of Iqbal's own couplets in "Bal-e Jibril"-046: "Na Tu Zameen Ke Liye Hai Na Asman Ke Liye, Jahan Hai Tere Liye, Tu Nahin Jahan Ke Liye" (you live neither for the earth nor for the skies, universe is made for you, you are not made for it) ("Allama Iqbal Poetry").

So, by not talking in terms of "categorical imperatives" as Kant would have it but linking reality of solid things with that of the feeling and emotion, we could be hopeful of hitting upon at least two fundamental benefits. The first positive outcome could come as a stabilizing force which would prevent our beliefs from becoming unreasonably vulnerable to the external retaliations. It is to suggest that our beliefs in such an arrangement could have a conviction and basis of their own. New doubts and questions would not have a confounding impact since we would be fully aware of the fact that our developed conviction is fully equipped to absorb or embrace any necessary change. This is important because things which are bigger in nature and which last relatively for longer periods of time can be redesigned only through a strong conventional framework. If this is not the case, reconstructions in any domain of human life would seem like a far-fetched and too ambitious a risk.

One might in fact say that in such a position, humans would be guided towards a mature analysis. There would be a possibility to welcome any contrary remarks, knowing that capacity to think and feel in a balanced manner is going to unfold in sensible and impartial answers. It is referred to as a mature analysis because the stability that would follow, would be operating from a holistic viewpoint. In other words, it would be creating an inclusive enterprise to channelize our fluctuating principles. Historically, in the patterns of conventional wisdom, this sort of outcome is usually associated with technical and scientific domain. But interestingly, this understanding could be furthered by bringing impartial behavioral pattern into the field of religious philosophy.

The second of the fundamental advantages would manifest itself in the moderate tendency that would stop perceiving reason as an enemy of religious structures which has been hitherto the case. Such change in these tendencies would be an equivalent of embracing humanitarian values and attributes. A concept like secularism would become more meaningful and plausible to the fundamental psyche in its pragmatic sense. It might even furnish a process via which fundamental tendencies can be stopped from getting converted into extremist actions. For instance, the burning of the fifty thousand books in

the library of Baghdad is one of the darkest events in the Islamic history and it has been justified on the basis of distorted and unreasonable manifestations of feelings. Abdulsalem Abdulkareem (librarian) expresses grief as he says, "When the Mogols came here in 1258, they burned the libraries and threw so many books into the River Tigris that the water ran black from the ink" (Westcott). Books are indeed one of the radical ways of storing information and they do hold power to change the world. They are symbolic of intellect and reason; and reason has always been at the core of Islam and this could be testified from numerous verses in Quran. For instance, Surah Fatir: 35:1 state, "He adds to his creation as He pleases". Surah-ar-Rahman: 55:29 states, "Everyday some new work employs Him". These verses invoke creativity and newness. Apart from these, a slightly deep linguistic venture would show many passages asking us to think, reflect and then act. The problem is in Muslims who do read Quran but barely understand it in its true essence. This might appear as astonishingly naïve interpretation of the problem, it is no later when such simple issues take dangerous forms and violent shapes.

It is essential to assign vitality to the mechanism which would not let the fundamental intentions to be transformed into the extremist ones since it is the only source that could hinder the criminal and brutal destabilizing forces in their initial formation. In the absence of such a rectifying tool, it is much less likely that the intellectual progression would manage to defeat the unjust threats posed by the traditional blocks. This sort of moderate solution holds a great relevance even in the contemporary universal bent where major chunks of the population readily and willfully desire to engage each other in unjust and violent actions in the name of some ideology or the other. In simple words, if extreme views are left to run their course and to define what the universe should look like, the complexity is only going to get multiplied. This implies that distortions and misinterpretations which are socially and politically organized and even furthered, got to be intellectually recognized and modified. If it is done, maturity in its complete sense would be embraced and exercised. The event would be a life changing one. Iqbal, especially makes even more sense today when a provocative, militaristic, chauvinistic and belligerent nationalist narrative is at work. He becomes even more prominent in contemporary scenario where ones understanding is inevitably colored by repressive and monolithic political forces. The irony, however, is that importance of Iqbal is do acknowledged in every influential debate on religion; but he is less read and understood in terms of the core principles of his philosophical theology, in Islamic world. The truth is that his poetry creatively incorporates ideas of resistance, protest and dissent. The theoretical rooting of his ideas is so strong that centuries after his demise, his ideas continue to usher change and inspire intellectuals only to create society which could be perceived as more open and tolerant.

Notes

- ¹ If all the wisdom, philosophy and celestial lore together cannot cure the ills of Muslims, it is sure that they are worthless.
- ² Kant uses the word 'tutelage' in his 1784 essay on enlightenment. He primarily blames man's "laziness and cowardice [as] the reasons why such a large proportion of men, even when nature has long emancipated them from alien guidance, nevertheless gladly remain immature for life. For the same reasons, it is all too easy for others to set themselves up as their guardians. It is so convenient to be immature! If I have a book to have understanding in place of me, a spiritual adviser to have a conscience for me, a doctor to judge my diet for me, and so on, I need not make any efforts at all" (1). Kant basically implies that it is self-imposed tutelage that we are mostly in hold of and overtly dependent on. It is primarily because that we consciously choose to keep our rationale aside and let others choose and decide for ourselves. In such a case, it is very easy for others to manipulate us.
- ³ The brouhaha over Rushdie's infamous text, *The Satanic Verses* (1988) can be seen as a result of the same distorted understanding of reality. The text gets banned in India even before it is released here. It is said, that the controversy began when one of the compatriots of Ayatollah Khomeini, the Iranian leader, informs him that the text allegedly contains blasphemous verses against Islam and that it repudiates the religion almost to the extent of triviality. Rushdie himself confesses in one of the interviews years later, that Khomeini on his death bed wouldn't have cared to read a 500-page book and that in all probabilities it is somebody else's miscalculated understanding of the book that led up to the chaos. He further adds, that if at all he wanted to criticize Islam he would have done it in a line, he doesn't have to write a five-hundred-page book in order to so. This incident sufficiently explains the dangers of blindly following certain self-installed moral guardians of society and culture. Also, not a single person bothered to read the book on its own to decide if it genuinely contains, anything, if at all, blasphemous. Again, the same Kantian notion of "convenient immaturity" is reiterated here. (see works cited for interview details).
(The couplets of Iqbal have been translated by the researcher for the article.)

Works Cited

- Berkley Center. Poison or Cure? Religious Belief in the Modern World (with Christopher Hitchens and Alistair McGrath). *YouTube*, uploaded by Berkley Center, 23 July 2013, www.youtube.be/Xc0kbM4tBYe.
- Iqbal, Allama. *Bang-e-dara*.1924.
 — <http://iqbalurdu.blogspot.com/2011/04/bal-e-jibril-046-na-tu-zameen-ke-liye.html?m=1>. Accessed 6 February, 2021.
 — <http://iqbalurdu.blogspot.com/2011/04/bal-e-jibril-030-dil-soz-se-khali-hai.html?m=1>. Accessed 7 Feb 2021.
 — <http://iqbalurdu.blogspot.com/2011/04/zarb-e-kaleem-029-tasawwuf.html?m=1>. Accessed 7 Feb 2021.
- Iqbal, Muhammad: *Essays on the Reconstruction of Modern Muslim Thought*, edited by Hillier, H.C & Koshul, Basit Bilal, Edinburgh University Press, 2015.
- Kant, Immanuel. *What is Enlightenment?*.1784.
 — *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*.1785.
- Nietzsche, Frederick. *Genealogy of Morals*. 1887.
- Rushdie, Salman. Salman Rushdie: Books, Affair, Biography, Controversy, Fatwa, History, Influences-Interview (2010). *YouTube*, uploaded by The Film Archives, 30 Dec, 2013, www.youtube.be/HRqLAGMWLXc.
- Westcott, Tom. Where the books weren't burned: Baghdads ancient library. *Middle East Eye*, 28 March 2018 07:23 UTC, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/features/where-books-werent-burned-baghdada-ancient-libraray>, last updated 2 years 3 days ago, Accessed 8 February 2021.

The Museum Today: Towards a Participatory and Emancipated Heterology

CATARINA POMBO NABAIS

Abstract: Foucault had the foresight to point out the existence of “other spaces” of power and to include the museum as one of the examples of these counter-places that are heterotopias. Assuming its current crisis situation in a constructive, positive way, the museum may declare itself as a heterotopic space, that is, a place of emancipation where new regimes of visibility and sensitivity are shared. Endowed with its own space-time, crossed by the multiplicity of the viewer’s voices, the museum can assert itself today as a common, participatory heterotopy; as a space of collective knowledge resulting from the actions of emancipated viewers.

Keywords: Museum, Heterotopy, Public Participation, Emancipation

“Above all, the museum is one of the places that offers the highest idea of man”
André Malraux, *The Imaginary Museum* (1965: 13)

Michel Foucault has deeply thought out the relationship of institutions with the structures of power. The military quarter, the school, the hospital, the prison are institutions that respond to a same logic of power organization and functioning. They were all designed in such a way as to have control over the bodies and life of the individuals who inhabit them, subject-individuals because subjected to the norms, rules and procedures imposed by these institutions.

Now, it is interesting to realize that, despite the critical and harsh Foucauldian idea of institution put forward in *Discipline and Punish* (1975), it is Foucault himself who, almost simultaneously,¹ finds the possibility to circumventing this same space of power with his concept of “other spaces” (“espaces autres”). Foucault is indeed a great thinker of space. In his systematic cataloguing of the architecture of the city, where he identifies the institutional spaces of the twofold power/knowledge, Foucault points out to other spaces that are not properly free (since they belong to the organization of the city) but constitute new ways of inhabiting and sharing the city. By distinguishing them from the utopias, as imaginary and unreal non-spaces, Foucault defines these “other spaces” as heterotopias:

Real places, effective places, places designed in the institution of society itself, and which are a kind of counter-places, a kind of utopias effectively realized in which the real places, all the other real places that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested and inverted. A kind of places that are out of all places, despite being localizable (Foucault 1994: 755-6).

What I want to underline is that, for Foucault, the museum is one of those “other spaces”. As he writes, “heterotopias of the time that it accumulates to infinity (...); museums and libraries are heterotopias in which time does not stop coming and landing on itself” (Foucault 1994: 757). I will show how this same ambiguity may be grasped in the very brief history of the idea of museum that I propose below.

Very Brief Notes on the History of the Museum

At the time of its invention in Ancient Greece, the museum begins as one of the institutions of knowledge: the place for classification of the world beings and for the organization of the world chaos. In this first moment, museum is above all an institution linked to the construction and transmission of scientific knowledge and, therefore, in close coordination with other cognitive institutions which are the “Republic of The Wise” and the “School” (Pombo 2006: 161-200). The most paradigmatic examples of this emerging figure of the museum are the *Lyceum* of Aristotle and Theophrastus, and the *Museum* of Alexandria. These magnificent institutions, both dedicated to teaching and research inspired by the muses, are determined by the “requirement of an exhaustive classification (...) such as book collections, zoological, botanical and mineral samples, letters, diagrams, paintings and all kinds of information gathered from fishermen, politicians, sailors, etc.” (Pombo 2006: 165, translation added).

Later, with the re-invention of the museum in the Renaissance and in the Baroque beginnings of modernity, the museum is configured as a place of disposition and exhibition of objects of all kinds, from the most extravagant to the most erudite, from the most banal to the most exotic and rare. These sets of objects were then collected in cabinets of curiosity - first private and then progressively public – either by “collectors, amateurs and curious”² who decidedly aim to contribute for the large classificatory operation that is then in its commencement, or by aristocrats or rich bourgeois eager to give visibility to their authority or to their wealth.

It is however with the French Revolution that the museum fully acquires the status of symbolic representation of political power. From this moment on, science and art museums are going to diverge.³ Science museums will follow the path of the disciplinary scientific advancements. Art museums will become the great allied of political power whose determinations it expresses and internalizes. In complete harmony with the academy of arts, the museum progressively acquires the authority that confers consecration to works of art and determines the recognition of artists. The most meaningful case is the *Louvre*, in Paris. First a royal palace, nine days after the fall of the monarchy in the 10th August 1792 it became a public museum intended to allow all citizens to share the previously private art collections and cultural values, now in the hands of the new revolutionary regime (see Schubert 2000: 17-18).⁴

It is also such monumental theatricality of power in its promiscuity with art and knowledge that is given to spectacle in the great universal exhibitions of the late nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century. The museum becomes an expression of triumphant capitalism, symbol of modernity and civilization but also a place of ostentatious power. According to Sloterdijk, “The gigantic Crystal Palace – the valid prophetic building form of the nineteenth century (which was immediately copied all over the world) – already anticipated an integral, experience-oriented, popular capitalism” (Sloterdijk 2013: 175, official translation). Along with this political and economic expressiveness, one witness the emergency of a new concept of museum as a gigantic

public space, popular, intensely decorated, involving a dimension of entertainment, capable of attracting all kinds of audiences, oriented towards the vivid and experiential and, therefore, marked by a much greater proximity to the citizen.

However, it should be noted that, in the opposite direction to this “popular” tendency of the art museum as a symbolic power institution, it is also at the end of the 19th century that, in the field of arts, a scenario of resistance to the established power begins to be configured with the constitution of what is called “independent system”. As Pierre Bourdieu stresses, Zola invented the figure of the “intellectual”, that is, the figure affirming the independence of art and all the cultural sphere: “the intellectual, constituted as such, intervenes in the political field in the name of autonomy and of the specific values of a cultural production field that has achieved a high level of independence face to the powers” (Bourdieu 1992: 186, translation added). This is the moment where the first art galleries facing the Museum institution were open. The artistic schools emerged too, as an alternative to the centralized and standardized system of the Academy. In 1863, by command of Napoleon III, in order to calm the revolt of the artists who were refused by the Academic selection, the *Salons des Refusés* is open in clear opposition to the official and academic *Salons de Paris*. They stood as the alternative halls in which the great names of Impressionism presented their works. “The universe of artists ceases to function as a hierarchical device controlled as a body and, little by little, was constituted as a *field* of competition in the face of the monopoly of artistic legitimacy” (Bourdieu 1992: 191).

With the entrance in the twentieth century, and especially from the 1930s in the USA and 1950s in Europe, the art museum begins to perform new functions. In large part, the museum is shaken by the crisis of art face to visual culture and the global empire of image empowered by photography and cinema. Hence, the museum, once reserved for the exhibition of type standard specimens, prototypes, auratic originals, was forced to open its doors to the copy, to let itself be conquered by reproduction, in a word, to surrender to the civilization of image. An important symptom of this transformation was the construction of MoMa guided by two fundamental determinations. On the one hand, MoMa was invaded by image. Truly revolutionary in its concept, since the 1930s, the Museum thought out by Alfred Barr, further modern painting and sculpture, displayed “an unprecedented inclusion of photography, architecture, industrial *design* and cinema, covering the entire spectrum of contemporary visual culture” (Schubert 2000: 45). On the other hand, the new idea of a participatory art museum begins to be drawn. In Alfred Barr’s own words, MoMA aspired to be “a laboratory where the public was invited to participate in the experiences” (Schubert 2000: 45). This participatory dimension of the museum will be reinforced by its increasing openness and permeability to the general public that comes in large number to frequent its rooms⁵. The museum does no longer present collections filtered by its own institutional authority, in the context of a somehow paternalistic conception face to a less prepared audience, but, on the contrary, it seeks now to accept and implement the criteria, the tastes, the appetites, the wishes of the public itself. In a word, what the museum loses in authority wins in democraticity. This participatory tendency was shared by many museums all over the world. That is the case of the *Pompidou Center* whose innovative character embraced emergent artists and new publics. “Like MoMa, the *Pompidou Center* surrendered to revolutionary goals and established itself by serving a growing and diversified audience” (Schubert 2000: 61).

Significantly, art market in the 1970s was marked by a clear split between, on the one hand, the financial system that supports the “great” museums and its “major” artists,

and, on the other hand, artistic movements which struggle and resist to the economic and speculative exploitation of art. Through a radical art and a “dirty aesthetics”, emerging artistic movements declared themselves against the established art. Examples include the libertarian movement *Fluxus*, which has affirmed itself as anti-art, contrary to the reduction of the artwork to a trade entity; the *Land Art* which, being directly made on the ground, cannot be exposed in any museum; or the *Arte Povera*, artisanal art that, by the use of simple, natural, non-noble materials, never before acceptable by the museum, intends to annulling the difference between art and everyday life or between nature and culture. The dialogue between the most creative and experimental art movement and the museums was broken. Even MoMa, which was open, since its foundation, to the most contemporary art movements, lost, in the 1950's, the will for meeting the most irreverent art scene of New York.⁶

The Museum Crisis

In general, this transformation of the museum is thought out as a crisis: the contemporary crisis of the museum. And this designation is intended to mark, either the loss of museum's authority and its consequent withdrawal from the most experimental artistic movements, or its submission to the criteria of the wider public and the economic power that underlies massification of taste (advertising, *mass media*). In fact, never the economy took over the museum so much. What one has today is a tearing scenario: from one hand, museums that seek to maintain the same criteria of excellence and taste that have always characterized them and which, for this reason, see themselves empty and at the border of ruin; on the other hand, large public museums, with highly successful exhibitions, which do not mind exposing plastic dinosaurs to attract entire families on rainy days. Never have this kind of museums had so many visitors. “Nearly 5.7 million people visited the *Metropolitan Museum of Art* in New York in 2011, the highest number in 40 years and higher in 400.000 visitors to the previous year” (Jürgens 2012: 86). Never have museums moved so much money and had so much projection in terms of blockbuster productions and exhibitions to the general public.

However, if one witnesses such a strong financial bet on the “big” museums and exhibitions of “great” artists recognized and promoted by the neoliberal system, never the financial support (both public and private) has been so reduced in what regards “smaller” museums, which prefer to expose “alternative”, emerging artists, as well as museums and cultural spaces outside the capital. Given the severe budget cuts in culture, many of these museums are at risk of closing. This contradiction forced the museums to adopt commercial strategies in order to attract new audiences (marketing, cultural tourism, etc.). The opening of museum branches at airports and shopping centres (e.g. the Rijksmuseum at Amsterdam Schiphol Airport) are paradigmatic examples. This will of the museum to meeting the needs of mass civilization, may be seen, for example, in extending the opening hours to a night regime, in selling the already customary pass that allows entry into several museums; in the invention of educational services, or in the rehabilitation of abandoned urban spaces (as the case of the industrial space where the *Tate Modern* was made, as well as the *Hamburger Bahnhof* train station or the *Matadero*, the former slaughterhouse of Madrid). Now, it is worth asking: What is the meaning of this transformation? How can the museum be redefined today? How can the museum be a place of resistance to the imperatives of market? How to resist capitalism through art and museum?

Museum Strategies for Overcoming the Crisis

I believe that, more than resigning to the condition of an institution in crisis, the museum may stand on the side of resistance, as a collective device, allied and giving strength to small artistic movements, contributing to the emancipation of the spectator and to the formation of a new community of equals. This means that the museum could take over the paradoxes of its current situation in a constructive and positive way, by affirming itself as a heterotopic place, and by letting itself be crossed by the multiplicity of voices that visit it. This hypothesis is based on the Rancierian thesis according to which:

The politics of art cannot therefore solve its paradoxes in the form of an intervention outside their own places, in the 'real world'. There is no real world outside of art. What exists are folds and doublings of the common sensitive tissue where the politics of aesthetics and the aesthetics of politics join and disjoin. (...) The real is always the object of a *fiction*, that is to say of a construction of the space where the visible, the expressible and the feasible intertwine (Rancière 2008: 83, our emphasis).

My proposal involves thinking about the museum as that "fiction" where the collective voices of enunciation and action may be heard. Maintaining its status of institutional place for representation and knowledge, the museum could also be the place of presentation, experimentation, affirmation of its own contingency as a space of collective knowledge, that is, of a knowledge produced in the action of the emancipated spectator. Only so, and following Rancière once again, could the museum be, in fact, a democratic place, since democracy is "the power of those who no longer have a title either to govern or to being governed (...). The scandal of democracy... is to reveal that this title can only be the absence of title, that the government of societies cannot ultimately rest but in its own contingency" (Rancière 2005: 54). Basically, my proposal is about finding new existing museological forms and trying to identify and intensify them. In fact, the crisis and the restructuring of the museum have always been accompanied by the constitution of lines of escape and resistance, that is, knowledge devices based on understanding art as a place of knowledge. And that is true at the level of the spectator, the curator and the museum itself.

Today, it is indeed possible to identify a new way of inhabiting museums. The experience and involvement of the spectator is now tendentially personalized. The cultured and demanding visitor also became an emancipated, active visitor. He/she is endowed with the status of an independent producer of meaning whose committed participation, interests, and opinions are recognized and taken into account by both the curators and the institution. Much more than a passive, inactive receptacle of the curatorial proposals that are extrinsically suggested to him/her, the visitor increasingly participates in the construction of the very meaning of the exhibition. This is true mainly in art museums. However, it has been extended to science museums which tend to meet the visitors' interests and tastes, inviting them to participate in a series of available activities. The trend is all over: the museum shows/sells what the visitor/consumer desires to see.⁷

In the context of curatorial activity too, the emergence of democratic mechanisms is today also very significant. These curatorial mechanisms which take the spectator as co-curator of diverse activities and events are being put in practice by numerous art museums.⁸ Other solutions increasingly adopted by museums go towards the constitution of the visitors as partners in the economic effort that museums have to develop in dealing

with the lack of funding, namely in crowdsourcing exhibitions. There are many examples of cross-cutting and interdisciplinary initiatives aimed at establishing bridges between the museum, the civil society, the university and the artistic community. This is the case of promoting free courses, seminars, conferences in partnership with universities as well as the organization of artistic residencies. This is also the case of the creation of museums' network, such as the *Island of Museums* in Berlin, or, more radically, the European museum network *l'Internationale* that proposes a horizontal, non-hierarchical and decentralised model of artistic internationalism and exchange among cultural agents, promoting a more direct relationship between institutions and civil society.⁹

One is therefore facing a set of very diverse initiatives by which the museum aims at giving voice to the community. As I will show next, these initiatives suppose the emancipation of the spectator and the affirmation of the artist as producer of installations and works *in situ*, as well as the experimental and participatory curatorship.

For a Museum to Come

The classical exhibition is directed at each of the visitors as singular, isolated, lonely subject. It offers each one the possibility of confronting oneself individually with the objects exposed thus opening up to personal aesthetic contemplation. But the contemporary art installations create a diverse form of reception: the visitor is not alone anymore but has now the opportunity to experiment his/her own collective dimension. As Groys says:

Moving from one object to another, such an individual visitor necessarily overlooks the totality of the exhibition's space, including his or her own position within it. An artistic installation, on the contrary, builds a community of spectators precisely because of the holistic, unifying character of the installation space. The true visitor to the art installation is not an isolated individual, but a collective of visitors (Groys 2010: 61).

The eminently political character of art is here in evidence. However, as Rancière warns, it is necessary not to fall into the demagogy of a certain politics of art. It is necessary to leave the vicious circle between what Rancière designates as "pedagogy of representative mediation" (or the representative regime) and the "pedagogy of ethical immediacy" (or the ethical regime)¹⁰. Art is political, yes, but not because it has a paternalistic role, either in teaching and transmitting values (ethics), or in unveiling the horror of the world (representation). As Rancière denounces:

Art is supposed to be political because it shows the stigmas of domination, or because it puts the reigning icons into erosion, or because it leaves its own places to become a social practice, and so on. After a century of supposed criticism of the mimetic tradition, it is clear that this tradition is still dominant even in the forms that want to be artistically and politically subversive. It is assumed that art makes us revolted by showing us revolting things, that it mobilizes us by moving out of the artist's studio or the museum and that it transforms us into opponents of the dominant system by denying itself as an element of this system (Rancière 2008: 57).

On the contrary, art is political when it opposes the idea that the enlightened and emancipated subjects can indicate the pathway of liberation for the oppressed. Art is political when it is based on the principle that any individual can compose the field of the "distribution of the sensible", by reconfiguring it, by reinventing it, by introducing in it a new fiction and new set of possibilities. As Rancière explains:

Art and politics are linked together as forms of dissent, as operations to reconfiguration of the common experience of the sensible. There is thus a politics of art that precedes the politics of artists, a politics of art as a singular division of the objects of common experience, which operates by itself regardless of the desires that artists may have to serve this or that cause (Rancière 2008: 70-71).

Social emancipation itself led to aesthetic emancipation because the working class produced a rupture in the way of feeling and thinking. The workers themselves, in their emancipated condition, broke the hierarchy that reduced them to the figure of a-theoretical, a-intellectual, a-artistic people. Against the vertical and causal logic in which one class of individuals explains and governs the other as if respecting a logic of difference between surface and subsoil, Rancière proposes a horizontal, rhizomatic model, according to a principle of indifference between the subjects. A principle according to which anyone can reconfigure, at any time, the distribution of the sensible regime, thus establishing a dissident and controversial "other space". In Rancière's words, "workers do not oppose practice to utopia; they conferred upon the latter the characteristic of being 'unreal', of being a montage of words and images appropriate for reconfiguring the territory of the visible, the thinkable, and the possible. The 'fictions' of art and politics are therefore heterotopias rather than utopias" (Rancière 2000: 65).

Once again, Foucault's concept of heterotopia echoes here. For Rancière, politics is the invention of a neutral space-time. It is the result of a dissensus, of a rupture with the prevailing and dominant system:

If the aesthetic experience touches upon politics, it is because it is also defined as an experience of dissension, opposed to the mimetic or ethical adaptation of artistic productions for social purposes. Artistic productions lose their functionality there, they leave the network of connections which gave them a destination by anticipating their effects; they are offered in a neutralized space-time, also offered to a gaze which is separate from any defined sensorimotor extension (Rancière 2008: 67).

Emancipation is the emergence of a form of existence separated from the dominant space-time. It is the emergence of an other-space-time, a new regime of making, of visibility, of perception of the multiple voices hitherto inaudible, anonymous. Emancipation is an action that involves the breaking, the dismantling and the collapse of the dominant enunciation regime in order to bring up, from it, new regimes of discourse, of visibility and of possible achievements.

[Emancipation] begins when we challenge the opposition between viewing and acting; when we understand that the self-evidence facts that structure the relations between saying, seeing and doing themselves belong to the structure of domination and subjection. It begins when we understand that viewing is also an action that confirms or transforms this distribution of positions. The spectator also acts, like the pupil or scholar (Rancière 2008: 19).

What is interesting to emphasize is that, for Rancière, not only emancipation is the affirmation of heterotopia, but this heterotopic neutral space is the museum. As he writes in *The Emancipated Spectator* (2008):

What forms a revolutionary working body is not the revolutionary painting, whether revolutionary in the sense of David or that of Delacroix's. It is rather the possibility that these works can be seen in the neutral space of the museum, in reproductions of cheap encyclopedias, where they are equivalent to those which yesterday told the power of kings, the glory of ancient cities or the mysteries of faith (Rancière 2008: 69).

Now, I think it is possible to combine Rancière's theses on the spectator with Groys's point of view on the installation and, from this conjugation, to affirm that the installation is the place *par excellence* of the emancipation of the spectator. As Groys writes:

The artist who designs a certain installation space is an outsider to this space. He or she is heterotopic to this space. But the outsider is not necessarily somebody who has to be included in order to be empowered. There is also empowerment by exclusion, and especially by self-exclusion. The outsider can be powerful precisely because he or she is not controlled by society (Groys 2010: 68).

According to Groys, the installation space let us perceive a controversial dimension of democracy: a place where the artist is both sovereign and excluded. Artist's freedom comes, precisely, because the artist has the power of self-exclusion, because he/she can create a heterotopic place, under his/her own rules. The artist then becomes an independent power from institutionalized power. In fact, as he states:

The installation space is where we are immediately confronted with the ambiguous character of the contemporary notion of freedom that functions in our democracies as a tension between sovereign and institutional freedom. The artistic installation is thus a space of unconcealment (in the Heideggerian sense) of the heterotopic, sovereign power (Groys 2010: 69).

What Groys underlines is precisely the fact that, in an installation, that is, in the exhibition of the artist's private space within the public space, the spectator is confronted with his/her own character of a dislocated. The spectator is him/herself heterotopic:

The space of an artistic installation is the symbolic private property of the artist. By entering this space, the visitor leaves the public territory of democratic legitimacy and enters the space of sovereign, authoritarian control. The visitor is here, so to speak, in foreign ground, in exile. The visitor becomes an expatriate who must submit to a foreign law – one given to him or her by the artist (Groys 2010: 59).

Heterotopia is here thought out in its most radical form: as a forced exile of the spectator. And democracy is exposed as a common space caused by the artist. Democracy rises as the emergence of a private *ethos* within a public *topos*. Democracy is the public space made private of the artist who is seen, in the installation, by the public eye. Democracy is thus born in the artistic gesture of installing an "other space" in the common space. In the words of Groys:

The author of an artistic installation is also such a legislator, who gives to the community of visitors the space to constitute itself and defines the rules to which this community must submit, but does so without belonging to this community, remaining outside it. And this remains true even if the artist decides to join the community that he or her has created (Groys 2010: 60).

Also, for Rancière, politics is made in the construction of a "other space" within the community and it is by the affirmation of this point of dissensus that art is political.

The effectiveness of art does not consist in transmitting messages, in giving models or counter-models of behaviour or in learning to decipher representations. It consists first of all in the displaying of bodies, in the cutting of singular spaces and times which define ways of being together or separated, in front of or in the middle of, inside or outside, close or distant (Rancière 2008: 61).

Final Note

“The politics of emancipation is the politics of the self as an other.
The logic of emancipation is a *heterology*”

Jacques Rancière, *On the Shores of Politics* (1998: 85)

Foucault, as seen above, had the clairvoyance of pointing out to the existence of “other spaces” of power. Spaces that, however, were still co-extensive to the power because somehow, they preserved it, they saved it from its ruin. On the contrary, what I want to defend is that the museum can affirm itself today as a communitarian, a participatory and an assertive heterotopy. In other words, the museum can be constituted as an expression, not of power and its tricks, but as an enunciation device of the strength belonging to emancipated citizens. In view of the multiple utopias which exist in their condition of mere possibles that act virtually in the real, the museum is a space with a local, unique, actual *topos* which, by its nature, can be a force of resistance to the prevailing power. As a heterotopic device, endowed with its own space-time, the museum can be an “other space” of public freedom, that is, a space of distributing new regimes of visibility and sensitivity. As Rancière says:

It is because the museum – understood not as a simple building, but as a form of division of the common space and specific mode of visibility – is constituted around the disused statue that, later, it will be able to accommodate any other form of disused object from the profane world. This is also why the museum can, in our days, accommodate modes of information circulation and forms of political discussion which try to be opposed to the dominant modes of information and to the discussion about common affairs (Rancière 2008: 65).

The artist can also function as a revolutionary trigger. In his/her uniqueness, in his/her occupation of space, the artist goes beyond his/her condition as a singular, private individual. More than a personal signature, the artist is the one whose production is a collective enunciation. His/her work points to the creation of a community to come.

It is time to give the floor to Deleuze and Guattari. In their last work, *What is Philosophy?* (1991), they thought art as the composition of affects and percepts that are beyond any and every subjective sphere and that belong to the collective dimension, calling to the constitution of a people to come¹¹. The art’s plan of composition can therefore be designated as the constitution of a people. Like art, the revolution is also the creation of a composite of actual events that, due to their consistency, assert themselves as a monument. With Deleuze and Guattari, one understands better what art is by reading what they write about the revolution and its immanent strength as a monument:

The success of a revolution resides only in itself, precisely in the vibrations, clinches, and openings it gave to men at the moment of its making and that composes in itself a monument that is always in the process of becoming, like those *tumuli* to which each new traveller adds a stone. The victory of a revolution is immanent and consists in the new bonds it installs between people, even if these bonds last no longer than the revolution’s fused material and quickly give way to division and betrayal (Deleuze, Guattari 1991: 167).

Such as the revolution, the success of art lies in the sensations that the artist has managed to make expressive. Sensations which, even if they do not last longer than their matter, they will always and forever function as a fusion between individuals, as the creation of a monument-event, as a universal compound in permanent becoming.

Heterotopia as *dissensus* happens in the new common and unfilled discursive space of the oppressed. That is where politics really is done. Quoting once again Rancière when, in his master work on emancipation, he speaks about the production of the heterotopic dissensus of emancipation: “This is the meaning of the paradox of the ignorant master: the student learns from the master something that the master himself does not know. He learns it as an effect of the mastery which forces him to seek and he verifies this research. But he does not learn the knowledge of the master” (Rancière 2008: 20).

The museum can be this place of collective discursive and expressive practices of an ignorant master. And, since politics is a form of fiction, one could thus say that the emancipated spectator can enter in a becoming-muse of the museum!

Universidade de Lisboa, Portugal

(The author is a Scientific Researcher at the Department of History and Philosophy of Sciences, Faculty of Sciences, University of Lisbon, Portugal. This work is financed by national funds through FCT – Fundacao para a Ciencia e a Tecnologia, I.P., within the scope of the I&D Unity of the Centro de Filosofia das Ciências da Universidade de Lisboa (CFCUL), Project with the Reference FCT I.P.: UIDB/00678/2020 and UIDP/00678/2020 and of the Transitory Norm - DL57/2016/CP 1479/CT 0063.)

Notes

¹ I refer to the text written in 1967 – “Des Espaces Autres” (“Of other spaces”) - whose publication Foucault only authorized in 1984, in the magazine “Architecture/Mouvement/Continuité” and which, subsequently, in 1994, came to be included in the volume IV of *Dits et Ecrits* (Writings).

² This is precisely the title of Krzysztof Pomian’s classic work (1987) *Collectionneurs, Amateurs et Curieux. Paris, Venice: 16th-18th century*.

³ In what concerns science museums, the amateurs and curious will be slowly substituted by the naturalists, botanists, zoologists or geologists whose aim is not to reunite exotic objects and beings anymore, but to give reason of the infinite variety of species (See Pomian 1987: 249-252).

⁴ This was not the case of the *British Museum*, founded in 1759, which was above all an exhibition space for collection of books and manuscripts. Indeed, in the *British Museum* “there was initially no clear separation between the library and the departments of natural history and archaeology, everything was managed by a librarian and two assistants” (Schubert 2000: 17).

⁵ As Karsten Schubert writes, “three developments have finally brought massive changes to museums across Europe. Post-war reconstruction and economic recovery were effectively completed in the West in the early 1970s [...]. For the first time, there was money for neglected museums. The second factor was the emergence of mass tourism and the corresponding leisure culture of the 1970s [...]. More than the availability of funding and the advent of mass tourism, it was the cultural changes of the 1960s that culminated in the events of 1968 that affected so deeply the fate of the museum” (Schubert 2000: 56-58).

⁶ As Elena Volpato says, “the conviction of artists that it was in no way possible for institutional machines such as MoMA to represent contemporary experimentation, or, in the interests of their *trustees*, to have nothing in common with the ideas and beliefs of the movement of American and international art” (Volpato 2010: accessed 10th August 2020).

⁷ As Rodney signalizes, “this situation is (partly) provoked by the evolution of consumerism and by a revolution in marketing: visitors (as consumers) and museum (as a merchant) co-create the meaning to be lived during the visit” (Rodney 2016: accessed 3 March 2019).

⁸ "The Museum *Stedelijk* from March to September 2014, presented drawings made collaboratively by visitors during their stay in the museum. In August 2014, the *Frye Museum* of Seattle launched *#SocialMedium*, an exhibition consisting entirely of selections made by visitors using social media (...). The Portland Museum of Art was involved in a similar project in 2014 entitled *#captureParklandia* which was composed of photographs *tagged*, taken with electronic devices, from Portland city parks, transmitted via *Instagram* to the museum's website dedicated to the project. The Boston Museum of Fine Arts used a popular vote to select the paintings to be included in an exhibition entitled "*Boston Loves Impressionism*". In the United Kingdom, similar projects were carried out at the London Museum, the *British Museum*, the *Victoria and Albert Museum*, the *Royal Pavillion* and Museums of Brighton and Hove" (Rodney 2016: accessed 3 March 2019).

⁹ See <http://www.internationaleonline.org/confederation>.

¹⁰ See Rancière 2008: 58-62.

¹¹ For a more detailed analysis of this major thesis of Deleuze and Guattari, see Pombo Nabais 2020: especially 341-353.

Works Cited

- Bourdieu, Pierre. *Les Règles de l'Art. Genèse et Structure du Champ Littéraire* ('The Rules of Art. Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field'). Paris, Seuil, 1992.
- Deleuze, Gilles and Guattari, Felix. *Qu'est-ce que la Philosophie? (What is Philosophy?)*. Paris, Minuit, 1991.
- Foucault, Michel. *Surveiller et Punir. Naissance de la Prison (Discipline and Punish. The Birth of the Prison)*. Paris, Gallimard, 1975.
- Foucault, Michel. *Dits et Écrits (Writings)*, Vol IV. Paris, Gallimard, 1994.
- Groys, Boris. *Going Public*. Translated by Steven Lindberg and Matthew Partridge. New York, Stenberg Press, 2010.
- Jürgens, Sandra Vieira. 'State of Museums. Successes and Failures of Cultural Tourism', *Arq./a – Revista de Arquitectura e Arte*, 102 (May/June), 2012, 86-89.
- Malraux, André. *Le Musée Imaginaire (The Imaginary Museum)*. Paris, Gallimard, 1965.
- Pombo, Olga. *Unidade da Ciência. Programas, Figuras e Metáforas (Unity of Science. Programs, Figures and Metaphors)*. Lisbon, Duarte Reis, 2006.
- Pombo Nabais, Catarina. *Deleuze's Literary Theory. The Laboratory of his Philosophy*. Preface by Jacques Rancière and English translation by Ronald Bogue. New York/London, Rowman & Littlefield, 2020.
- Pomian, Krzysztof. *Collectionneurs, Amateurs et Curieux, Paris, Venice: XVI-XVII siècle (Collectors, Amateurs and Curious. Paris, Venice: XVI-XVIII century)*. Paris, Gallimard, 1987.
- Rancière, Jacques. *Aux Bords du Politique (On the Shores of Politics)*. Paris, La Fabrique, 1998.
- Rancière, Jacques. *Le Partage du Sensible. Esthétique et Politique (The Politics of Aesthetics. The Distribution of the Sensible)*. Paris, La Fabrique, 2000.
- Rancière, Jacques. *La Haine de la Démocratie (Hatred of Democracy)*. Paris, La Fabrique, 2005.
- Rancière, Jacques. *Le Spectateur Emancipé (The Emancipated Spectator)*. Paris, La Fabrique, 2008.
- Rodney, Seph. 'The Evolution of the Museum Visit, from Privilege to Personalized Experience', *Hyppoalergic*, 2016. <http://hyperallergic.com/267096/the-evolution-of-the-museum-visit-from-privilege-to-personalized-experience/?wt=2>, accessed 3 March 2019.
- Schubert, Karsten. *The Curator's Egg. The Evolution of the Museum Concept from the French Revolution to the Present Day*. London, One-Off Press, 2000.
- Sloterdijk, Peter. *In the World Interior of Capital. For a Philosophical Theory of Globalization* (trans. Wieland Hoban). Cambridge/Malden, Polity Press, 2013.
- Volpato, Elena, "The Art Workers' Coalition" in *Mousse Magazine*, n. 25, September–October 2010, <http://moussemagazine.it/art-workers-coalition-elena-volpato-2010/>, accessed 10th August 2020.

Hugo, Hegel, and Architecture

JOSÉ LUIS FERNÁNDEZ

Abstract

This essay aims to contribute comparative points of contact between two influential figures of nineteenth century aesthetic reflection; namely, Victor Hugo's artful considerations on architecture in his novel *Notre-Dame de Paris* and G.W.F. Hegel's philosophical appraisal of the artform in his *Lectures on Fine Art*. Although their individual views on architecture are widely recognized, there is scant comparative commentary on these two thinkers, which seems odd because of the relative convergence of their historically situated observations. Owing to this shortage, I note that, while certainly not identical, Hugo and Hegel share an aesthetic family resemblance in how they hold similar ideas on architecture's symbolic function, cognitive content, and, ultimately, how the artform's ability to remain a standing paragon of meaning was razed by successive modes of cultural communication. Consequently, the essay works to show some congruent aesthetic affinities between these two great figures, but which appears to be overlooked in the literature.

Keywords: Architecture, End of Art, Hegel, Hugo, *Notre-Dame de Paris*

Hugo and *Notre-Dame de Paris*: The Work Hangs Interrupted

Published on 16 March, 1831, and more commonly known to readers outside of France as *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*, Hugo blended fictive and reflective voices to write in, and of, *Notre-Dame de Paris*:

No doubt she's still a sublime and majestic edifice, the cathedral of Notre-Dame de Paris. But however much of her beauty she may have retained with age, it's hard to avoid groaning, it's hard to avoid growing angry at the countless degradations and mutilations that have been inflicted on this venerable monument by time and humanity, without any respect for either Charlemagne (who laid the first stone) or Philippe Auguste (who laid the last) (Hugo 2004b, 53).

On 15 April, 2019, groans turned to cries as all the world watched the 850-year-old Cathédrale Notre-Dame de Paris burn to ruin, which seared in our minds the indelible image of its roof and spire in a towering geyser of flames.¹ Draped by a darkening twilight, the nightmarish catastrophe appeared as if the infernal waves of *Phlegethon*, as could be imagined in the mythological mindsets of the ancient Greeks,² still profluent in Virgil's moat of rolling fire and Dante's retributive river of boiling blood,³ and from which Hugo himself drew as the incendiary metaphor on whose ashen shores washed up the as yet to be baptized foundling Quasimodo (Hugo 2004a, 143), ensured that Our Lady of Paris's story will need further retelling over time.

Hugo's telling of *Notre-Dame de Paris* was itself a transitional narrative that imagined a sixteenth century tragic romance from a nineteenth century political perspective, and it not only skyrocketed his career, but its widespread popularity also fulfilled the author's ulterior motive to propel fervent demand for the renovation of the then withering cathedral. Although Hugo had already appealed for Notre-Dame's restoration six years earlier in his 1825 remonstrative pamphlet *Guerre aux démolisseurs!* (War on the Demolishers!), « *Quelquefois on sauve une admirable église en écrivant dessus* » (Sometimes you save an admirable church by writing about it),⁴ he continued to use his novelistic skills to amplify the intersecting lines of aesthetic and political obligations, thus offering a kind of architectural apologetics which gave action to his convictions.

Hugo's 1831 belief in *Notre-Dame de Paris* over the power of art to ameliorate the rupture between the present and the past, thereby presenting a connecting chronology of French struggle, unity, progress, and purpose remained a guiding thread in his work, as we see confirmed in the 1862 epigrammatic Preface to *Les Misérables* wherein he adopted an encompassing, far-seeing historical viewpoint to reassert his confidence over the utility of art and the agency of artists to effect social transformation.⁵ Hugo, perhaps the most extolled novelist France ever produced, writes with the fervor of a religious revivalist who viewed the great cathedral not only as a revered House of God to restore solemn adjuration in the multitudes but, even more so, as an accretive reflection of French history: "Notre-Dame de Paris isn't what could be called a complete, definite, classifiable monument.... Every side, every stone of the venerable monument is a page not only of our country's history, but also of the history of science and art" (Hugo 2004b, 63).

The surfaces and partitions of Notre-Dame, its many blocks and subdivisions, are taken by Hugo as carefully curated *précis* of human progress, each one communicating a brief hypothesis, an experiment, a conclusion, or perhaps evoking a judgment of taste. Accordingly, the multifaceted building of the famous cathedral displays an amalgam of activity which Hugo believes can bridge the gap between "the history of science and art," or what C.P. Snow called the "two cultures,"⁶ by builders and spectators perceiving, as described by George Steiner, how architecture can construct a relation in which "Archimedes joins Michelangelo"⁷ in polymathic union: "While Daedalus, who is force, measured, and Orpheus, who is intelligence, sang, the pillar which is a letter, the arcade which is a syllable, the pyramid which is a word, simultaneously set in motion both by a law of geometry and a law of poetry, formed groups" (Hugo 2004a, 190).

For Hugo, the story of human progress, from brutish nature toward civil society, is a rich, multilayered *roman d'apprentissage* (or *Bildungsroman*) always working through the growing pains of increasing experiential stages: "The social instinct succeeds the nomadic instinct. The camp gives place to the city, the tent to the palace, the ark to the temple.... The human intellect is always on the march, or, if you prefer, in movement, and languages with it."⁸ Architecture communicates the growing complexity of human experience as a coming-of-age story disclosed not only in ideas and words, but also in the assemblage of deeds; moreover, the fragmented, ongoing construction of great monuments like Notre-Dame captures the continuity of Hugo's proleptic optimism in how it entails that the parade of ideas, words, and deeds is constantly forging ahead: "Progress is the mode of man. The general life of the human race is called Progress; the collective advance of the human race is called Progress. Progress marches on" (Hugo 2013, 1232).

At their best, great monuments, like great societies, serve as visible symbols of our progressive history to give us a fuller socio-cultural reading of the past to better

understand the stories we tell about ourselves in the present. As Hugo told them, with architecture as foreground, these stories are anything but straightforward by calling our attention to how the commingling of science and art produces an ever-emerging historical hybrid, an artifact whose distinctive contributions supervene on a constitutive whole that is always more than the sum of its features:

So Romanesque abbey, philosophical church, Gothic art, Saxon art, heavy round pillars reminiscent of Gregory VII, hermetic symbolism of the kind that made Nicolas Flamel a forerunner of Luther, papal unity, schism, Saint-Germain-des-Prés, Saint-Jacques-de-la-Boucherie, are all fused and combined and amalgamated in Notre-Dame. This central, seminal church is a sort of chimera among the old churches of Paris: it has the head of one, the limbs of a second, the rump of a third—bits and pieces of all of them (Hugo 2004b, 63).

Hugo's extraordinary passage aims to convey the transition from Romanesque to Gothic architecture as a magnificent *mélange*, whose collected traits are equally retained and nullified in the grand synthesis called Notre-Dame. It also speaks to the power of art and science to collect and communicate knowledge and understanding of specific historical stages of human activity.

Grand architecture does not stand independent of its builders and spectators, who are both children of their times, and thus articulate systems of belief, *visions du monde* or worldviews, in how it codifies narratives of human history in which no one voice can claim final authority:

Indeed, many a massive tome and often the universal history of mankind might be written from these successive weldings of different styles at different levels of a single monument. The man, the individual and the artist are erased from these great piles, which bear no author's name; they are the summary and summation of human intelligence. Time is the architect, the nation the builder (Hugo 2004a, 129).

The *visions du monde* expressed by monuments are agglomerations of human community; they join together, rather than isolate. Hugo sees architecture as showing discrete packets of time collected into a visual artform that conveys prevailing ideas, atmospheres, and feelings. It is an interpretation that found a resonant echo in Martin Heidegger's association of architecture with *World*.⁹ For Heidegger, the notion of *World* serves as a *frame* of reference for a community's experience, and can be interpreted as a nexus of relationships and organizing framework that reveals historically situated being. Just as with Hugo's exhibition of the French Catholic cathedral as a structure that can bind (*religare*) communal living, Heidegger uses the example of the Greek temple, which he views as an object that "sets up" or structures the values, beliefs and worldviews of a given culture to itself, "The temple-work, standing there, opens up a world.... The temple, in its standing there, first gives to things their look and to men their outlook on themselves."¹⁰

As *World*, the temple opens up a first look to how *Dasein*, Heidegger's term of art for the unique existential state of human self-consciousness, relates to itself and its needs as historically situated being. Karsten Harries puts it as follows, "So understood, architecture, as opposed to mere building, has an essential public function: its task is to help gather scattered individuals into a genuine community by presenting the powers that preside over its life."¹¹ Thus, in the case of the Greek temple, Heidegger argues that the structure conveyed to the ancient Greeks their own particular onto-semantics, that is, what it *is-means* to be an ancient Greek.

Similarly, to appreciate Hugo's metaphor for recognizing the accumulative deposits of French history in Notre-Dame's "standing there," requires a kind of onto-semantics revealed by the ability to see above and beyond the proximal altitude and ambit of one's eyes: "When you know how to look, you can discover the spirit of an age and the physiognomy of a king even in a door-knocker" (Hugo 2004a, 149). Thus, in order to read the prevailing *Zeitgeist*,¹² one must be able to see from an elevated standpoint that can discern the "successive weldings" of the many *Geister* summed up in an age.

However, this is no small task. Because historical human activity is both interspersed and blended in paroxysmal fits of construction, Hugo relates that epochal shifts are never clean and neat. The lines of demarcation that would subtend the opposing sides of one age from another must be drawn light and thin rather than dark and thick, and the study of transitions weaves a guiding hermeneutic much like an Ariadne's thread which, instead of leading out of a vertiginous maze, reminds us that our work in the labyrinth of time is always unfinished:

Each wave of time lays down its alluvium, each race deposits its own stratum on the monument, each individual contributes his stone. Thus do the beavers, and the bees; and thus does man. The great symbol of architecture, Babel, is a beehive. Great buildings, like great mountains, are the work of centuries. Often architecture is transformed while they are still under construction: *pendent opera interrupta*, they proceed quickly in keeping with the transformation. The new architecture takes the monument as it finds it, is incrusts on it, assimilates it to itself, develops it as it wants and, if possible, finishes it (Hugo 2004s, 129).

Notre-Dame, like the novel itself, is an encyclopedic work, incorporating a vast collection of ideas that, while attempting to explain the world, will always find itself inadequate to the task of capturing its growing complexity, thus requiring periodic updates and revisions.¹³ The phrase "*pendent opera interrupta*" or "the work hangs interrupted" appears in Book 4 of Virgil's *Aeneid*, and speaks to this ongoing project; specifically, when Queen Dido, possessed by her increasingly beguiled and blinding passion for Aeneas, neglects due attention to Carthage's fortifications, leaving towers and walls half-built.¹⁴ For Hugo, the phrase speaks to the fundamentally incomplete nature of human society, which, though always struggling to overcome impediments to progress, cannot afford to forsake its obligation to build on its legacies. *Ignis aurum probat*, and it will also presently test our capacity and determination to contribute our "own stratum" in the renewal and reinvention of Notre-Dame.

Fortunately, the transformation of the majestic cathedral is underway. Aline Magnien, director of the Historical Monuments Research Laboratory (LRMH), the organization charged with conserving all of France's monuments, claims with optimism that, "Notre Dame will be restored! Its artwork, stone, and stained glass will be cleaned; it will be more luminous and beautiful than before... Notre Dame will come out of this experience enriched... And so will we."¹⁵ *Petit à petit l'oiseau fait son nid* (little by little, the bird builds its nest). Notre-Dame's radiant beauty will shine again because it was, and is, more than a standing colossus of old stones and picturesque glass. Hugo's admiration of the monument has, on my reading, always reflected the Goethean commission rendered so eloquently by the historian Jaroslav Pelikan, "What you now have as heritage, now take as task, for thus you will make it your own."¹⁶ Although it was recently besieged by a harrowing Covid-19 interruption, the task to rebuild and preserve Notre-Dame is newly taken and guided in the early twenty-first century by the enduring spirit of French and worldwide human resilience with French President Emmanuel Macron projecting a reopening in 2024 to coincide with the celebration of Paris hosting the Summer Olympics.¹⁷

Hugo and Hegel

As we have seen, for Hugo Notre-Dame was more than a towering *mise-en-scene* in which to situate his story of the doomed Esmeralda and her sympathetic bellringer. It is a monument that stands before us as a mirror of its architects, builders, and caretakers, with all of its “fused and combined and amalgamated” historical elements consolidated for sublime philosophical reflection and promotion of sensible practical maxims. With this dual power in mind, in *Les Misérables*’ many narrative digressions Hugo writes exuberantly about the power of philosophy to turn theory into practice, “Socrates should enter into Adam and produce Marcus Aurelius—in other words, bring forth from the man of enjoyment the man of wisdom—and change Eden into the Lyceum” (Hugo 2013, 516). The metamorphosis from Eden into the Lyceum depicts man’s departure from nature to spirit, from impulse to thought, and from mechanism to freedom. Sensuous amusements might well befit non-contemplative dispositions, but human self-consciousness pursues a higher pleasure fueled by the capacity of philosophical thinking to contemplate and then *actualize* “the ideal.”

This activity, whose results might come to nothing, is still experienced as a joyous attempt to reveal how elements which seem materially dispersed can still be cognized as a totality. Moreover, Hugo considers that “Philosophy is the microscope of thought; everything wants to escape it, but nothing can. Turning your back on it is futile. What side of yourself do you display when you turn your back? The shameful side” (Hugo 2004b, 397). Within Hugo’s lifetime, various philosophers did not turn their backs on attempts to unify disparate forces of human experience. Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), who died two weeks before Hugo turned two, applied the regulative use of transcendental ideas as heuristic guides beyond experience to formulate standards of historical phenomena in their totality,¹⁸ as well as positing the possibility of unified aesthetic judgment in his notion of *sensus communis*.¹⁹ However, the nineteenth century philosopher who is perhaps most famous for attempting an understanding of ourselves and our world as a unified whole is G.W.F. Hegel.

At first blush, Hegel and Hugo would seem like strange bedfellows which might explain the scant number, if not a lacuna, of comparative commentary.²⁰ On the one hand, we might have the greatest dialectician among philosophical system builders, but maybe the “ugliest” prose stylist in the German language;²¹ on the other hand, perhaps we have the most belletristic of modern French novelists, but also, as noted by Graham Robb, a writer whose “idiom...was a model of the world of opposites he had grown up in, characterized, notoriously, by its heavy use of antitheses.”²² Antitheses, tensions, polarities, the beautiful and the ugly, the bestial and the spiritual, the holding together of opposites were all constitutive, *poietic* elements not only of art but also of society. Hence, it would appear that chance has a taste for forging unexpected, yet suggestive, connections between historical contemporaries who imprinted the stamp of their belief in the elevated products of human self-consciousness and keen observations of antisyzygous relationships on their monumental works. We note, for example, that Hegel (1770-1831) died when Hugo was twenty-nine, near the end of the same year that saw the novelistic birth of *Notre-Dame de Paris*.

However, more importantly, Hugo shared with Hegel the sentiment that architectural monuments disclose crucial steps toward an understanding of ourselves and our world through a dialectical birth of cultural formation. Hugo’s keen observation of the formative dynamics behind a culture’s architecture, and his acknowledgment that monuments collect

the residual deposits of a communal language, comports with Hegel's identification of the same artworks as formative products (*bildenden*), and more fully as the results of a process of "formative education" (*Bildung*) (Hegel 1977, 16).²³ Hugo took seriously the idea that architecture possesses a kind of *readability*. In the sixteenth century, Galileo famously introduced the metaphor that the book of nature is read through the language of mathematics.²⁴ Hugo considered that before this point, the legibility of humanity was written most clearly within the old stones of monuments. Before books there were buildings, so the elucidation of humanity begins with architecture:²⁵

In fact, from the origin of things up to and including the fifteenth century of the Christian era, *architecture was the great book of mankind*, man's chief form of expression in the various stages of his development, either as force or as intelligence (Hugo 2004a, 189: my italics).

For Galileo, the universe was an enormous book; for Hugo, humanity was an enormous edifice of spatio-symbolic associations etched in buildings that served as reflective texts. Architecture, and indeed the plastic arts in general, presages prosaic modes of communication that write and speak to us but not by actually writing or speaking. Instead of offering literal communication, the language of architecture, far more than merely weaving *narratives* of symbols, words, sentences, and stories, worked to form visible *paradigms* of figurative meaning. In this sense, Hugo relates how he viewed architecture as offering a combination of descriptive accounts (narratives) and explanatory models (paradigms) of discursive activities by which the primary means of cultural communication was conveyed through a legible system inscribed in stone. Thus historical works of architecture represent eloquent legacies of art and history in which the sum of their figurative parts, their covers, spines, bindings, and pages are unified in a meaningful idea of a whole text.

Before Hugo, Hegel also understood architecture as straddling the illuminating grounds of art (*Kunst*) and history (*Geschichte*) by standing against us as discursive objects (*Gegenstanden*) of past cultural experience for our reflective contemplation. Architecture reveals edifying narratives whereby common bonds and normative modes of human transaction were formed, which is exemplified in Hegel's rendition of cultural homogeneity before the great scattering from the Tower of Babel (Hegel 1975b, 638). Although Hegel does not share Hugo's assessment of architecture as the chief form of fifteenth century cultural expression, along with Hugo, he also perceives it as possessing a certain kind of legibility, in fact, as the first artform (*Kunstform*) to inscribe the story of humanity (Hegel 1975a, 83-84).

For Hegel, the deciphering of this symbolic form of art is performed by a dialectical hermeneutic which begins to tell a story about the need of Spirit (*Geist*), i.e., of rational, self-conscious, self-determining humanity that gradually develops in history by gathering greater knowledge of its essential freedom, to come together in community. Initially, as the first of the arts,²⁶ architecture's formation is a mix of function and harmonious rules of geometrical "regularity and symmetry;" namely, the gathering of nature's resources to safeguard Spirit.

Individuals and communities seek to rise above the precariousness of natural life by gathering within the shielding integument of cultural enclosures. Thus, for both Hegel and Hugo, the legibility of architecture discloses the needs of human communities. This perceptive reading reveals both the goal and the task for Spirit. The goal is revealed insofar as a work of architecture gives shape to the external environment of Spirit. As

primitive representations of art, Hegel argues that buildings signify culture (*Bildung*), but only in its outer or external form, which bespeaks only to Spirit's inchoate needs. However, in its final stages of development, architecture, specifically temples and churches adorned with higher arts (e.g., sculpture, painting, and music), will gesture toward the immaterial and spiritual, which suggests the inherent freedom of Spirit to ultimately transcend any encasement in inorganic form.

In this respect, human engagement with architectural forms is experienced not only with an understanding of their protective and unifying social utility, but also, if received by spectators capable of performing a certain kind of hermeneutic excavation, for aesthetic and philosophical profit. As an example, with regard to his artful addition of formerly missing passages in an updated volume of *Notre-Dame de Paris*, Hugo imagines his ideal readers as philosophically interested. Although art can be experienced and enjoyed in various ways, for Hugo, as for Hegel, artifacts are never truly separated from human understanding, but are always standing open for "willing" interpreters who can "complete" the artwork by raising to consciousness a deeper, hidden stratum of meaning: "Each tradition was sealed beneath a monument" (Hugo 2004a, 189).

As an example of unearthing the meaning concealed beneath appearances, Hegel observes how the Egyptian Pyramids express two-aspects, one is external, the other is internal.

Here Hegel utilizes an archeological hermeneutic to disclose a kind of hidden presence lying underneath the magnificent appearance of Pyramids; namely, a necropolis of tombal associations that can help us grasp the whole meaning of an artifact, thus bringing to light what he terms the Unconscious Symbolic (*Die unbewusste Symbolik*).²⁷ However, the work of having to call to presence what is hidden or secret is a major drawback in architecture's aesthetic form, e.g., by the Pyramids concealing their real purpose as one-sided monuments of the pharaohal afterlife, it is stuck at a stage of aesthetic development that is too alien, uncanny, and impoverished to convey to Spirit its more immediate content of self-understanding.

Hegel argues that because architecture, at any stage of development, cannot ever shed its utility as a structure for some purpose other than its own, it is incapable of aesthetically reflecting the self-sufficient Idea, i.e., the perfect harmony between matter and Spirit. As a result, architecture is judged as inadequate to the task of bringing Spirit before itself. Although it usefully reflects mind, it does so only symbolically. For Hegel, the stamping of symbolic meaning is not without value but is only a first stage of shaping the exterior world to reflect inner Spirit, however inadequate to the task. Moreover, consonant with Hugo's view that monuments express *visions du monde*, Hegel notes how some structures disclose worldviews that outlast the times of their productions. Architecture has always held value for its extant expression of the needs and values of historical beings, if merely symbolically. Similarly, Hugo also relates the commensurate development of architecture and mind as a beginning stage in which mind inscribed symbols to read itself: "Architecture thus evolved along with the human mind; it became a giant with a thousand heads and a thousand arms, and fixed all this vacillating symbolism in a form at once palpable, visible and eternal" (Hugo 2004a, 190). Like Hegel, Hugo never abandoned the notion that architecture is an expressive means of conveying cognitive content and cultural value. However, both thinkers also came to the same conclusion that this mode of meaningful conveyance has historically run its course.

The Pastness of Ar[t]chitecture

With regard to the conveyance of cognitive content, specifically, human self-conscious reflection on itself, both Hegel and Hugo propose theses over the so-called deaths of art and architecture, in which contents of Mind are handed off to more modern modes of cultural communication. Hegel's thesis is more complex than Hugo's and requires some technical explication. At the heart of Hegel's moribund assessment is the view that art can be studied as a philosophical science which is capable of revealing truth (*Wahrheit*). In this sense, philosophy and science are inextricable. Philosophy is a science insofar as its purview is conceptual thought (what Hegel calls *the Concept* or *der Begriff*). Hence artworks lend themselves to scientific study, but only as objects (*Gegenstände*) that exemplify Concepts (*Begriffe*) for Spirit's reflection into itself. Artistic truth (*künstlerische Wahrheit*) arises out of the concomitant mediation between an object and its constituent Concept, and if an artwork exhibits truth, it does so by revealing to Spirit the Concept in its presentation as a sensuous object.

The triune interrelationship between *Gegenstände*, *Begriffe*, and *künstlerische Wahrheit* cannot be overemphasized in a study of Hegel's aesthetic theory. For the unity of Hegel's artistic trinity explains not only the reason Hegel thinks that there can be a systematic inquiry of truth in "the wide realm of the beautiful," but also why definite aesthetic truth is had at the expense of "the beauty of Nature" (Hegel 1975a, 1) which, being driven by external forces, provides reason with criteria that are too indefinite, too arbitrary, and too vague, to comprise the proper subject matter for a science or *Wissenschaft* of art. Artistic truth necessarily reflects Spirit and is not found in the one-sided domain of nature, which by itself is wholly characterized by chance and transience.

Thus, scientific discussions of art cannot be made under the aegis of accidental, arbitrary, and "bad, transitory world" (Hegel 1975a, 11), whose substantial element is grounded in external and contingent forces. Rather, scientific discussions of art are able to reveal truth only under the *Gestell* of *Geist*, that is, under the rational frame of the philosophy of Spirit. For Hegel, only Mind is capable of grasping truth by recognizing the necessary mediation between *Gegenstände* and their corresponding *Begriffe*. Therefore, since a *Wissenschaft* of art cannot ensue from studying the accidental and contingent, its destitute and Mind-forsaken "sensuous element" precludes the scientific discussion of artistic truth. By Hegel's lights, the truth that art expresses can only be shone by objects that embody conceptual thought, and whose categorical truth is capable of being apprehended by self-conscious subjectivity, which by reflecting on the mediation between object and concept recognizes itself.

The 'three in one' framework of *Gegenstände*, *Begriffe*, and *künstlerische Wahrheit* discloses the fundamental logical structure of a given artistic, indeed historical, period, and this triad is exactly what Hegel takes architecture, in any of its developmental stages, to lack. Architecture, comprised of stone, clay, and metals, is not the proper medium to reflect Spirit.

At most, architecture hints toward, but does not embody, the Concept of Spirit. Consequently, we come to Hegel's famous conclusion that not only architecture, but also artworks in general, no longer serve as torchbearers of cultural value:

[I]t is certainly the case that art no longer affords that satisfaction of spiritual needs which earlier ages and nations sought in it, and found in it alone, a satisfaction that, at least on the part of religion, was most intimately linked with art....Consequently the conditions of our present time are not favourable to art....In all these respects art, considered in its highest

vocation, is and remains for us a thing of the past. Thereby it has lost for us genuine truth and life, and has rather been transferred into our *ideas* instead of maintaining its earlier necessity in reality and occupying its higher place (Hegel 1975a, 10-11).

The time when artworks had the power to convey substantive ideas has long since passed the torch to philosophy (Hegel 1975a, 13). Not only is the art of the past incapable of revealing to Spirit its inner truth, but so too with contemporary works of art:

Thus the '*after*' of art consists in the fact that there dwells in the spirit the need to satisfy itself solely in its own inner self as the true form for truth to take....This is the case in our own time. We may well hope that art will always rise higher and come to perfection, but the form of art has ceased to be the supreme need of the spirit (Hegel 1975a, 103).

In the development of Spirit, ar[t]chitecture served its purpose, it helped to point the way to self-conscious awareness of self-determining freedom, but it was left behind by higher cultural forms like religion and, ultimately, philosophy. Spirit created art, but ultimately replaced its pride of place in society by outgrowing its representation in materially available media.

Similarly, though much less technically, Hugo articulated a similar shift in aesthetic and cultural influence in the fifth chapter of *Notre-Dame de Paris*, titled "This Will Kill That" (*Ceci tuera cela*). Using the villainous perspective of Claude Frolo, the archdeacon of Notre-Dame, architecture's ability to convey meaning is mournfully anticipated:

The archdeacon contemplated the gigantic cathedral for a time in silence, then he sighed and stretched out his right hand towards the printed book lying open on his table and his left hand towards Notre-Dame, and looked sadly from the book to the church: 'Alas,' he said, 'this will kill that.' The book will kill the building....It meant that one art was going to dethrone another art: it meant: printing will kill architecture (Hugo 2004a, 187-89).

This (the capacity of the printing press to disseminate ideas) will end that (the power of massive stone monuments to capture and direct the collective mindset). On my reading, instead of announcing a 'death of' or 'end of art thesis,' both Hegel and Hugo actually posit a *senescence of art thesis* without really proclaiming the finality of its demise. Hegel, as we have seen, hoped "that art will always rise higher and come to perfection" (Hegel 1975a, 103), which does not so much certify art's death rather than reposition its weakened cultural value. For his part, Hugo view of architecture likewise refrains from pronouncing the former while also announcing the latter:

This is not to say that architecture will not now and again have a fine monument, an isolated masterpiece...The great accident of an architect of genius might occur in the twentieth century just like that of a Dante in the thirteenth. But architecture will no longer be the social, the collective, the dominant art. The great poem, the great edifice, the great creation of mankind will no longer be built, it will be printed. And in the future, should architecture accidentally revive, it will no longer be master (Hugo 2004a, 200).

Thus, for both Hegel and Hugo, the move is one of displacement rather than of effacement. With Hugo, this shift reflects a modern gesture toward a growing literacy that can understand itself through books as used to be done through architecture. Moreover, this new etching of humanity into the bible of paper is, as Hugo viewed Notre-Dame, a "prodigious edifice [that] remains perpetually unfinished" (Hugo 2004a, 201). However, for all of their aesthetic resemblances, it is exactly here that a comparison of similarities between Hugo and Hegel must come to an end. For Hegel, the end of ar(t)chitecture is

indelibly inscribed in stone and in paper, while for Hugo, it should be noted, the rise of the book is not without its own drawbacks, sounding the alarm for a potential second Tower of Babel (Hugo 2004a, 202). In heralding this caveat, the artful novelist uses his own inscription within the bible of paper to hopefully usher in a consequent age in which architecture can again take center space in the town square of human discursive practices not through a recycling of the past, but rather, because the “ceaseless” and “indefatigable” work hangs interrupted (*pendent opera interrupta*), there is still hope that a perpetually engaged process of architectural progress can capture and approximate toward the goal of humanity as I am sure he would see taking shape in the current efforts to revivify his beloved Cathédrale Notre-Dame de Paris.

Fairfield University, USA

Notes

- ¹ An electrical malfunction is suspected to have started the destructive flames.
- ² *Pyriphlegethon*, the flaming river of Tartarus. See, Plato, *Phaedo* in *Plato: Complete Works*, ed. John Cooper, trans. GMA Grube (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997), 96.
- ³ Virgil, *Aeneid*, trans. Frederick Ahl (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 146; Dante, *The Divine Comedy: Inferno*, trans. Charles S. Singleton (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), 149.
- ⁴ Later published in Victor Hugo, “Guerre aux démolisseurs,” *Revue des deux mondes* 5 (1832), 607-22.
- ⁵ Victor Brombert, *Victor Hugo and the Visionary Novel* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), 12, argues that Hugo “believed that writers had a mission, that they were the educators and leaders of the recently awakened *peuple* (people), that they were to regenerate society, prepare the future, and write, as it were, on paper and in life, the immanent epic of humanity’s progress.”
- ⁶ C.P. Snow, *The Two Cultures* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
- ⁷ TheNexusInstitute. “George Steiner on How to Reform the Humanities. Universitas? Part III.” Online Video Clip. *YouTube*. YouTube, February 22, 2013. Web. Accessed: December 2, 2019.
- ⁸ Victor Hugo, “Preface to *Cromwell*” in *Romanticism*, ed. John B. Halsted (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 102-03, 116.
- ⁹ Martin Heidegger, “The Origin of the Work of Art” in *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (New York & San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1977), 170.
- ¹⁰ Heidegger, “The Origin of the Work of Art,” 169.
- ¹¹ Karsten Harries, *The Ethical Function of Architecture* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000), 279.
- ¹² In his Introduction to *Notre-Dame de Paris* (2004a), John Sturrock relates how Hugo was “preoccupied with what in recent years in France has come to be known as the ‘history of mentalities’, or the state of mind of a population at a given historical period” (xiii-xiv).
- ¹³ Brombert, *Victor Hugo and the Visionary Novel*, 84, identifies a “dynamic of undoing that Hugo reads into the processes of nature and creation,” which dwells on the notions of “ceaseless reconstruction” (118).
- ¹⁴ Virgil, *Aeneid*, 79.

- ¹⁵ Christa Lesté-Lasserre, "Scientists are Leading Notre Dame's Restoration," *Science Magazine*, March 12, 2020. doi:10.1126/science.abb6744.
- ¹⁶ "Was Du ererbt von Deinem Vätern hast, Erwirb es, um es zu besitzen." Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust: Part 1*, trans. Peter Salm (New York: Bantam, 1985), 54; Jaroslav Pelikan, *Faust the Theologian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 28.
- ¹⁷ Austin Horn, "Work is Started on Removing Damaged Scaffolding Around Notre Dame Cathedral," *NPR.org*, June 8, 2020. <https://www.npr.org/2020/06/08/872372221/work-started-on-removing-damaged-scaffolding-around-notre-dame-cathedral>.
- ¹⁸ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, eds. Paul Guyer and Allen Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), KrV A771/B779. Kant appears in Hugo's long poem *L'Ane* or *The Ass* in which a seemingly immortal, worldly-wise donkey encounters "My old Kant" (*mon vieux Kant*) and begins to recite his beast song (*mon chant de bête brute*) to, *inter alia*, denounce Kant's transcendental idealism, which can speak about scientific knowledge but remains quiet on the experiential matter of knowing God. See Victor Hugo, *L'Ane*, ed. Calmann Lévy (Paris: Michel Lévy Frères, 1880).
- ¹⁹ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, ed. Paul Guyer, trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 5:293.
- ²⁰ Jean Mallion, *Victor Hugo et l'art architectural* (Paris: PUF, 1962), briefly mentions certain affinities in only four, scattered pages, the most substantial of which relates how Hugo joined Hegel in thinking "le contenu de l'art es constitue par l'idée, représentée sous un forme concrète et sensible [the content of art is constituted by the idea, represented in a concrete and sensitive form]" (558).
- ²¹ Robert Pippin, *Hegel's Idealism: The Satisfactions of Self-Consciousness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 5.
- ²² Graham Robb, *Victor Hugo: A Biography* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999), 170.
- ²³ Hegel employs the term *Bildung* to express rich connotations of culture, formation, and education, all of which are interrelated. *Bildung* is as much a *process* of cultural development as it is a *product* of cultural values.
- ²⁴ Galileo, "The Assayer" in *Discoveries and Opinions of Galileo*, trans. Stillman Drake (New York: Doubleday, 1957), 237-38.
- ²⁵ Indra Kagis McEwen argues that "all of Western thinking was first grounded in architecture," and reminds us that Plato's Socrates claimed his family's lineage back to Daedalus the inimitable architect, and that his father, Sophroniskos, was himself a skillful stone mason. See Indra Kagis McEwen, *Socrates' Ancestor: An Essay on Architectural Beginnings* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1993), 130, 2, respectively. For the Plato, see Alcibiades (121a) and Euthyphro (11b-c) in *Plato: Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997).
- ²⁶ In increasing dialectical order: architecture, sculpture, painting, music, and poetry.
- ²⁷ Cf. F.W.J. Schelling, *The Ages of the World: Book One, The Past*, trans. Joseph P. Lawrence (Albany: SUNY Press, 2019), 68.

Works Cited

- Hegel, G.W.F. 1975a. *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art, Vol. 1*. Trans. T.M. Knox. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- _____. 1975b. *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art, Vol. 2*. Trans. T.M. Knox. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- _____. 1977. *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Trans. A.V. Miller. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hugo, Victor. 2004a. *Notre-Dame de Paris*. Trans. John Sturrock. New York: Penguin Books.
- _____. 2004b. "From *Notre-Dame de Paris*" in *The Essential Victor Hugo*. Trans. E.H. Blackmore and A.M. Blackmore. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- _____. 2013. *Les Misérables*. Trans. Lee Fahnestock and Norman MacAfee. New York: Penguin Books.

Weaving Cityscapes with Oral Narratives: A Study of Select Travel Narratives by Biswanath Ghosh

MUKULIKA DATTA GUPTA

Abstract: Despite of the fluidity in specifying the genre of travel writing, it documents a place, its people and their stories. This paper has selected three books by Biswanath Ghosh – *Tamarind City: Where Modern India Began* (2012), *Longing Belonging: an Outsider at Home in Calcutta* (2014) and *Aimless in Banaras: Wanderings in India's Holiest City* (2019). The objective of this paper is to look into the use of oral narratives to collect the fragments of the history of a city in the form of stories and how these responses to individual memories lead us to a collective memory of a place.

Keywords: oral narrative, storytelling, memory, travel writing, cityscape

From Conquistadors to backpack explorers and pilgrims, throughout the ages travelers of different types with different objectives have travelled far and wide across the globe. Many such travelers have also kept an account of their journey and their experiences of new places and people, making a significant contribution into the realm of knowledge and in turn broadening its spectrum. Though for a long time travel narratives remained quite neglected as a repository of history and information, but in current times it is seen as one of the key components in the archive of historical information. On account of current postcolonial trends of globalization travel and tourism has also emerged as an important industry. Globalization has in turn helped to enhance the cross-cultural contacts between people, places and cultures. The industry of travel and tourism has played an important role in this whole phenomenon of postcolonial cultural contact. In this world of globalization thus travel narratives have earned a relevant place for themselves. There are travelogues, where the author is seen to rely on the oral narratives of the residents of a particular place. Thus considering oral narratives as a source of first hand information and identifying memory based individual stories as the path to reach out to the collective postcolonial history and experience of a city.

While having a discussion on globalization many scholars might trace back its roots to colonialism and the gradual rise of capitalism. The way travel narratives have responded to the current economic, social and political debates of this globalized world has made the study of travel narratives a prominent part in postcolonial studies. It is one of the major objectives of postcolonial studies to investigate into the impacts which were made due to the establishment of European colonies almost in all the continents, as it caused displacement of a huge number of people of various communities and nationalities under different circumstances and with different objectives. A study of various travel accounts

provides a very interesting path to trace the resultant cross-cultural interactions which took place due to these willing or unwilling movements of people. During the process of colonization oral narratives almost lost their importance to the emerging dominance of the written tradition. But again in postcolonial studies oral narratives seem to regain their place of importance to which travel narratives respond spontaneously. Travel narratives do recognize the importance of oral storytelling and also identify oral narratives as a repository of information and history. Thus in a travel narrative many a times these oral narratives turn out to be the contact point between the traveler and the place. These oral narratives set a point of negotiation between the traveler and the place. According to Carl Thompson:

“If all travel involves an encounter between self and other that is brought about by movement through space, all travel writing is at some level a record or product of this encounter, and of the negotiation between similarity and difference that it entailed.” (Thompson 10)

In Biswanath Ghosh's works such a point of contact and further negotiations form at both the cultural and linguistic levels. In the prologue of his book, the author justifies the title as a response to his childhood memory and identification with the city of Chennai. He associates with the oral narratives which he heard as a child from his father. He writes, “...my first impression of Madras, was formed on the basis of his (author's father) accounts, was that it was a city of tamarind trees. No other detail registered because of my inborn love for the taste of tamarind.” (Ghosh, *Tamarind City* xiv) As we have already mentioned that how we generally tend to respond to our memories in oral narratives based on our own identification and understanding of a travel subject. From the above example it is clear that in such cases many a times we see a new place based on our memory and this recognition may get reflected in a travel narrative as well. Regarding his response to his memory of his father's account of the city and the oral narratives which he heard from his parents while growing up gave him a nostalgic impression on his arrival at the city. He says, “At times, walking the streets of Chennai, I wonder if I am walking over footprints left behind by my father way back in 1976.” (Ghosh, *Tamarind City* xiv).

In his works Ghosh has tried to establish a kind of previous connection with the city of his quest. The connection seems to serve as the foundation for his works. He says, “As a child I would pay a visit nearly every year with my parents to see my grandmother, always taking the steam pulled Toofan Express from Kanpur, where I was growing up. But I absorbed almost nothing of Calcutta from those trips. The memories that I have relate mostly to our stay in the homes of various paternal uncles and aunts, who were scattered across the city and took turns in looking after my grandmother.” (Ghosh, *Longing Belonging* 1) though he confesses, that “Calcutta, at best, had been a piece of old furniture stored away in the attic.” (Ghosh, *Longing Belonging* 1), but at the same time his book relates his quest to understand the city by exploring its arteries and the people who are invariable parts of it. In *Aimless in Banaras: Wanderings in India's Holiest City* (2019) we get the accounts from a boatman along with the renowned professors of the Banaras Hindu University (BHU). From the stories and memories of 'extraordinary' people to the most 'ordinary' people he tries to extract the story and the collective memory of the city. In his travelogues Ghosh has tried to reconstruct the city in his memories. The interviewees of his travel narratives have also tried to reconstruct the city from their memories in their oral narratives which they have related to the author, be it Sunil Gangopadhyay on Calcutta or Kashinath Singh on Banaras or be it the comments of Muthiah, the Madrasman, on Chennai and Colombo.

A journey begins when we set one foot beyond our door step. This one step is actually our first step to run into a series of encounters of different tastes. By different, here we would understand our difference with 'the other'. At this juncture we may smell a sense of stereotyping but with a sense of hope for negotiation which brings a positive rather an optimistic note towards coping up with the cultural otherness. Ghosh talks about his encounter with a *Sikh* gentleman in the train, who seem to have quite a lot of stereotypical notions about the city of Chennai as well as about the people from the Southern states of India. This gentleman seems to believe that there is no life in Chennai and thus it is impossible to live there. He also seems to consider the case of civility of the people from the south Indian states as timidity or cowardice. (Ghosh, *Tamarind City* xviii) But while this whole conversation there is no display of aggression rather there is a possibility of negotiation in case of a debate based on experience. The author being a journalist reports this incident. He leaves it upon the readers to value judge the same.

Thus along with the sense of otherness there is also an understanding for that cultural otherness whereas, while discussing his connection with Calcutta, he emphasizes on the process of retracing his childhood memories of visiting the city with his parents during vacations. Thompson argues that this 'principle of attachment' may work at different levels and in different ways. He adds that generally travel writers find the use of simile at their direct disposal and thus, make a good use of it. (Thompson 68) It sometimes gives the readers a good ground for identifying and then assimilating the unknown with the known experiences and encounters of the travel writing. Experience of places, people and cultures could mostly be understood as a balanced blend of familiar and unfamiliar aspects. It is impossible for a single traveler to narrate the complete picture of a place, its people and culture. The narration of the traveler's experiences and encounters of a place, people and culture would thus tend to be a partial perception of the same. Thus we may say that it would be foolish to generalize a particular place and the culture of the communities of that place from the accounts of a traveler. But of course the importance of reading a travel narrative lies in the fact that they are capable of giving us the part of the larger picture of the unknown. In other words we may say that travelogues are not a general or the whole representation of the world and its realities, but a representation of a particular viewpoint which is just a part of the larger perspective of the reality of the world which consists of little dreams and aspirations of the individuals of a particular community, that in turn helps the reader to get the pulse of the place to a certain extent.

In his Author's note Ghosh has mentioned very clearly that the book actually is the documentation of his experiences and encounters of the city "between the spring of 2011 and the spring of 2013". (Ghosh, *Longing Belonging* ix) These experiences and encounters have helped the author to connect with the city of his memories and has also taken him beyond that. He says, "I have never looked at Calcutta that way. I have hardly known Calcutta for that matter. My visits to the city, first as a boy and much later as a son-in-law, have been too brief and protected to look beyond the visible." (Ghosh, *Longing Belonging* 12) He frankly admits the limitations of his childhood memories regarding the city and also states the reason for that. Thus in his quest to understand the city he takes up the journey to the places where he never went before. In his encounters with the people in these places has helped him in weaving a cityscape based on the stories of past told by the inhabitants of the city. He also refers to how the historical places become "the treasure house of stories". (Ghosh, *Tamarind City* 30) in this context a comment made by an army officer seems to be very significant, who was posted at Fort St. George in Chennai, he

says that the life of an army officer is full of travelling and thus is like a repository of anecdotes from different parts of the country and from the different communities they mingle with in the due course of their transferable job. (Ghosh, *Tamarind City* 15) Thus stories seem to be everywhere and as a traveler to get hold of the bigger story of the city it becomes important for the traveler to learn to read a city through the stories and anecdotes that are related to it.

Both Individual memory and collective memory are dynamic in nature. Memory of any kind involves real experiences and events along with an understanding of the same in the current context. It could be very well argued that many times memory also displays a kind of selective nature in terms of what to remember and thus is liable to any kind of change, but at the same time "acknowledging memory as subjectively (or socially) reconstructive does not mean that it is per definition unreliable and that the notion of truth is inapplicable." (Altanian 13) In other words we might say that memory could be a truthful account of past and thus is deeply related to the history, which in turn makes it responsible towards the past it is relating to. We must not neglect the fact that memory refers back to certain social relations and events like memory related to certain dates and events. For instance, in his interview to Ghosh, Sankar mentions his experience of war during 1942, he then refers back to his early memories of public transit in Chennai and then tries to compare it with the current scenario and he follows the same process while comparing the current education system with the previous one. (Ghosh, *Tamarind City* 208-209) Sankar reconstructs the city from his memory on the basis of these points of social references and he follows the same pattern while comparing the city of his memories with the current cityscape of Chennai. In this case the stored memory functioned as a storehouse of knowledge. This knowledge refers to the postcolonial history of a particular cityscape and gives the listeners a firsthand record of the previous cityscape of the same city. With the narrator of the story based on his/ her memory the audience/ the reader gets the chance to stand face to face with both past and present and in the process establishes a connection with the narrator. Story telling by responding to one's memory is a medium to establish a direct social connection between the narrator and the listener.

Traveling experiences might sometimes turn out to be quite bewildering for the traveler as they might be drastically different from what the traveler might have experienced till date. This could be truer when it comes to the travelling of a completely unknown place, people and their culture, but sometimes it could be true for the cases where the place may be not so unknown to the traveler. Thus travel experiences even to a considerable known place might also turn out to be estranging some times. This estrangement might take place in different forms ranging from horror, despair to a sense of absolute delight. According to Carl Thompson under such circumstances the traveler sometimes loses the language and fails to express himself/herself while documenting such an experience or encounter. Ghosh says, "...even planned books rarely go as per plan." (Ghosh, *Aimless in Banaras* 47) Thompson also adds that at this juncture the author faces "two challenges, of comprehension and of communication.." (Thompson 67) The objective of a travel writer is to make sense of his/her own experiences and to relate the same experiences and encounters of the travel to the reader in an identifiable manner.

While we discuss and talk about stories of experiences and encounters in terms of their importance as the historical repositories the question of authenticity haunts us, as the postcolonial world comfortably tends to deny any possibility of oral documentation. Thus the authenticity of once memory and hence one's story are always brought under

scrutiny. To deal with the issue of truthfulness and authenticity travel writers generally tend to use the phrases like 'I went', 'I saw', 'I spoke' and many such first person verb forms. From the above quotes it is clear that Ghosh's words are also not an exception in this regard. The use of first person verb forms help the authors to exercise the capacities of an eye-witness, by emphasizing the presence of the author at the very moment he/she is trying to discuss. In other words this could be considered as a process to claim an ownership of the experiences and the encounters of the author as a traveler. Despite the efforts of the author to prove his/her narratives as the authentic one the sense of suspicion remains till the end. But on the other hand reading a travel narrative may also engage the reader with the author on the basis of belief and trust. Also through this use of first person verb forms the narrator tries to articulate the world of his/her own thoughts and feelings. For instance Ghosh makes an ironic comment relating physical labor with being poor and rich. (Ghosh, *Aimless in Banaras* 20) He makes several significant comments on life and death in his works. While discussing the cremation grounds of Banaras and Calcutta especially in the context of Banaras he relates his meditations and philosophical understandings of the human cycle of life and the concept of Shiva in this regard. During his conversation with Kailash, who says, "...sometimes I carry burning wood (from a pyre) home even to cook. Only last night we cooked rice and daal and chokha on wood from a pyre." (Ghosh, *Aimless in Banaras* 114) and on hearing the author reacts, "...I would say you are Shiva!" (Ghosh, *Aimless in Banaras* 114)

In the process of preserving, telling and listening stories language plays an important role, also language cannot be considered separately from the cultural aspect. In fact language is not just a means of communication but also a cultural vehicle of the respective community. While discussion on travel narratives how can we ignore the linguistic aspect of the new encounters and points of negotiations. Ghosh gives us a glimpse of this otherness of the language according to the place and the people who use it. He talks about a simple English word 'Mansion'. The general impression related to the word does not match with Ghosh's encounter with it on his arrival at Chennai. He relates, "The mansion, I discovered, is the common name for a lodge meant for bachelors and single men. I subsequently got to learn that there were scores of single men in Chennai who had attained old age living in these mansions." (Ghosh, *Tamarind City* xx) Similarly there are stories regarding the origin of certain words for instance the word dubash has come into existence from the word *dobhash* or the interpreter. (Ghosh, *Tamarind City* 49). Similar is the case of origin of the word nautch that came from the simple word *naach*. (Ghosh, *Longing Belonging* 197) These instances highlight the stories of postcolonial linguistic formation of new words and new connotations of the words of our day-to-day understanding of the postcolonial linguistic experiences and encounters.

Travel narratives are too fluid a genre to have a specific definition of its own. Also its fuzzy boundaries as a genre liquefy it in terms of specifications. Many travel narratives carry certain geographical details to emphasize on the aspect of authenticity of the narrative. This is not a new practice. As there are some evidences of travelers to keep a record of the geographic details of the places they have been to. This reminds us of travelers like Al-beruni, who has recorded every geographical detail of the place he got to visit in India. He has also added description of a particular geographic location as described by many ancient Indian scriptures and texts. For example, he says, "The holy much venerated ponds are in the cold mountains around Meru. The following information regarding them is found in both the *Vâyu* and the *Matsya Purâṇas*..." (Sachau 551) In the

case of geographic description Ghosh's works are also not an exception; in his works he has given a vivid description of the roads and streets. Ghosh not only give the proper geographic location of the street or lane or road he is talking about, but at the same time he describes his feelings and experiences on seeing the events taking place in a street once at a time. Following is the description of what he saw on a Pongal afternoon near his mansion within a few hours of his arrival in Chennai, "That afternoon, when I ventured into the adjacent street in search of a mobile phone connection, I ran into a sea of people. ...The men look menacing with their thick moustaches. The women wore flowers in their hair and on their faces sweat-smudged talcum powder or a yellow tan left behind by turmeric paste. I had never thought the term 'rubbing shoulders' could be so literal. I began to feel giddy. ...I felt like a child lost in a village fair who was desperately trying to spot his parents. ...The main road turned out to be South Usman Road, and the street branching off it, which nearly choked me, Ranganathan Street." (Gosh, *Tamarind City* xxi) Such city mapping seems to be a prominent feature of Ghosh's works. In another instance he is giving a brief postcolonial mapping of Dharmatala and says, "DHARMATALA is one of the first neighborhoods to come up in Clive's Calcutta, separated from the calm of the Maidan by the busy Chowringhee Road. ...The taxi drops me at Metro Cinema on Chowringhee Road. From there I turn into SN Banerjee Road and begin my search." (Ghosh, *Longing Belonging* 75) Ghosh also refers to some monuments and buildings and locations looking for the postcolonial history that is preserved in architecture. Bitter and Weber would say, "ARCHITECTURE CAN CARRY MEANING, hold memories, and make history....Such histories live most tangibly at the scale of the city, but they are also expressed at a national level, where architecture can be deployed to reinforce or to challenge collective social memory." (Bitter and Weber 39). In his quest to trace back the ever changing postcolonial cityscapes of India like Chennai and Calcutta he has referred to the history of forts like Fort St. George of Chennai, where he found the evidences of the beginning of postcolonial India and Fort William of Calcutta that witnessed so many ups and downs in shaping the postcolonial cityscape of Calcutta. Ghosh has also taken a look into churches and cemeteries that too had a story of postcolonial India to narrate.

Ghosh has talked a lot about certain landmarks of a city, from the 'holiest' to the 'unholiest' in his books. In *Aimless in Banaras* he talks a lot about Vishwanath Gali, the lane which leads the pilgrims to the famous temple of Kashi Vishwanath, in *Longing Belonging* he speaks of Sonagachhi as well as of College Street and in *Tamarind City* he elaborates Mylapore. He describes Mylapore through smells and scents and says, "I smell the flowers and the vegetables even before the autorickshaw driver has deposited me on the edge of one of the four streets that form a rectangle around the Kapaleeswara temple." (Ghosh, *Tamarind City* 126). In a similar fashion he describes the Kalighat Road of Calcutta and says, "...the road, which is lined up with shops selling items of worship, shops selling musical instruments, shops selling household needs, such as umbrellas and steel trunks, hawkers selling vegetables..." (Ghosh, *Longing Belonging* 69) While waiting for his turn to enter the Vishwanath temple he narrates his experience in the queue and says, "Chatter fills up the alley containing the queue. My ears can tell that Tamils, Telugus and Bengalis – in that order – outnumber the others. The voices, irrespective of the language, betray impatience..." (Ghosh, *Aimless in Babaras* 12) All these streets and lanes have their own distinct smells, population and above all their own signature stories of pain and pleasure to tell, hidden by a façade of their face value. In the documentation of Sonagachhi

of Calcutta the author comes face to face with the story of origin of the street which says, "I introduced myself, upon which he (an elderly taxi driver at the taxi stand) had put the news paper aside and smiled. 'The street has a name, Durga Charan Mitra Street, but people know it as Sonagachhi. Do you know why it is called Sonagachhi?' 'No, I don't.' 'That's because at the other end of the street is the *mazaar*' – tomb – 'of an Islamic preacher called Sunaullah Ghazi, who was known by the locals as Sona Pir Baba. It is because of him that this place came to be known as Sonagachhi...'" (Ghosh, *Longing Belonging* 276-77) This instance depicts the fact that an oral narrative holds the history of a place and how every landmark has a story to tell. In the same section of this book when the author engages in a further conversation with the same taxi driver, Shankar, he relates his story as well as the stories of the people of this particular street. He also shares a lot of his experiences and encounters, with the author and in the process we get to see how the author connects himself and his readers with the oral narration of one's experiences and encounters which manytimes turn out to be a part of the bigger history of a particular street.

Such landmarks also include places like Coffee House in Calcutta and Pappu's Tea Shop in Banaras, where stories are born. Both spots are famous as *adda* zones. While talking of Coffee House the author writes, "The Coffee House too is an institution by itself; not just because it belongs to College Steert, but also because it has institutionalised the Bengali's favourite pastime: *adda*. ...your credentials as a Bengali intellectual aren't impressive enough if you haven't done *adda* at Coffee House at some point in your life. ...Many a famous Bengali had once upon a time has spent his evenings in Coffee House..." (Ghosh, *Longing Belonging* 47-48) This landmark of postcolonial Calcutta is quite comparable to Pappu's Tea Shop which is also considered as "an institution" (Ghosh, *Aimless in Babaras* 195), where the intellectuals of Banaras like Kashinath Singh come to have a cup of tea and then pen down the stories about the city in the books like *Kashi ka Assi*, that is weaved around the characters of Banaras whom the writer had encountered at Pappu's Tea shop. In search of story of the cities Ghosh has explored these landmarks as well and have tried to dig into their history and the events which they have witnessed.

These stories took Ghosh to the families who have added to the history of the city of his quest. The story of these families contains a big chunk of the history of the particular city. Stories of the Appah family, told by one of the family members, contain the history of the formation of the city Chennai. Appah family was the pioneer family which settled in Madras (Currently known as Chennai). The family history is very much like the grand beginning and flourishing of a single family and then the financial decline of the same, though it sounds like a very clichéd kind of a story but in the story of ups and downs of a family contains the story of a child and his experiences of the city while he was growing up depicting a picture of the ups and downs in the life of a city as well. (Ghosh, *Tmarind City* 52-56) Similarly on the other hand the city of Calcutta which is also known for its signature sweets especially *rosogolla*, whose history is actually the story of the Das family. Again the author speaks to one of the family members, who relates an oral history of the family as well as the history of the sweet and thus a chunk of the postcolonial history of the city which is still preserved in the form of family stories. (Ghosh, *Longing Belonging* 221-238) Be it the language, the landmark, the people, the locality, a family, an individual or even food habits all these parameters are involved in understanding the history of a place. Every story hidden in relation to all these parameters is one of the stories which the particular place has to tell.

In *Aimless in Banaras* Ghosh points out, "Each man has a different story and different ancestry, but right now they are collectively reaching out to their respective ancestors through a priest who is guiding them through the rituals mechanically." (Ghosh, *Aimless in Banaras* 94) A city begins at a certain landmark and then gradually spreads whereas; the place of its origin remains neglected. As a priest a traveler tries to unearth the stories of the past from the neglected city as well as from the upcoming and emerging new sections of a city. Ghosh as a traveler has tried to dig into the postcolonial construction and reconstruction of a few Indian cities by collecting the fragments of history in the oral narratives of the people and the places which came up while responding to their individual memories to draw a bigger picture of collective memory of the city itself.

Adamas University, Barasat, Kolkata

Works Cited

- Altanian, Melanie. "Archives against Genocide Denialism?" *Memory as Social Construct*. (2017): 13-17. *Swisspeace*. <http://www.jstor.com/stable/resrep11066.6>. 20 November 2020.
- Apaydin, Veysel. "The interlinkage of cultural memory, heritage and discourses of construction, transformation and destruction". *Critical Perspectives on Cultural Memory and Heritage*. Ed. Veysel Apaydin. UCL Press. (2020): 13- 29. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv13xpsfp.7>. 03 November 2020.
- Bitter, Sabine and Weber, Hlemut. "Making Ruins". *Memory*. Ed. Phillipe Tortell, Mark Turin and Margot Young. Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies. 39-47. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvbtzpfm.7>. 03 November 2020.
- Ghosh, Bishwanath. *Tamarind City: Where Modern India Began*. Chennai: Tranquebar, 2012. Print.
- . *Longig Belonging: An Outsider at Home in Calcutta*. Chennai: Tranquebar, 2014. Print.
- . *Aimless in Banaras: Wanderings in Indian's Holiest City*. Chennai: Tranquebar, 2019. Print.
- Lougharn, Kevin. "Imbricated Spaces: The High Line, Urban Parks, and the Cultural Meaning of City and Nature". *Sociological Theory*. 34:4 (2016), n. pag. 311- 334. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26382874>. 03 November 2020.
- Sachau, Dr. Edward C. *Alberuni's India: An Account of the Religion, Philosophy, Literature, Geography, Chronology, Astronomy, Customs, Laws and Astrology of India about A.D. 1030*. New Delhi: Rupa, 2002. Print.
- Thompson, Carl. *Travel Writing*. New York: Routledge, 2011. Print

Interpreting 'madwomen': A Study of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" and Pratibha Ray's "The Eyes"

ANWESHA SAHOO

Abstract: This paper explores the theme of madness in two short stories by women writers. Mental ailments like 'madness,' 'hysteria' and 'nervous condition' are readily associated with women. This paper aims to go beyond the actual illnesses and socially constructed definitions to investigate the implications of 'insanity' and the causes that lead to a woman being labelled 'mad.' While Charlotte Perkins Gilman's story "The Yellow Wallpaper" is written in the late nineteenth-century America, Pratibha Ray's story "The Eyes" is situated in Odisha in the late twentieth century. This paper would investigate the different yet related concerns that these two authors address.

Keywords: Women's writing, madness, feminism, female authors, marriage, female psyche.

Marriage and motherhood are supposed to be the ultimate source of happiness for women, or at least that's what society would have them believe. But what happens when the men who were supposed to be their partners and provide love and companionship, become the source of constant, subtle, or even explicit forms of oppression, exploitation and psychological torment for women?

This paper offers a close textual analysis of two short stories by women writers who delve into questions regarding women, their place in society, and explores very minutely, their psychological spaces that inspire their thought and action. The first story I have selected is "The Yellow Wallpaper" (1892), a semi-autobiographical work by the American author Charlotte Perkins Gilman, a 'utopian feminist.' The second story is "The Eyes" (1980) by Padma Shri awardee Pratibha Ray, an Odia woman writer. The emphasis of the study is on the theme of 'madness' when it afflicts women, and its causes. The stories deal with two female protagonists who are trapped in a world that controls every aspect of their existence.

'Madness' has been a part of numerous pieces of literature over the centuries. The Victorian era saw a rise in the trope of madness in writings by women authors. Helen Small observes how a "madwoman's doubly subversive literary potential (subversive because she is mad and because she is a woman) proved very attractive to other feminist critics." In the nineteenth century, a number of women were suffering from mental ailments like nervous breakdowns, hysteria and post-natal depression. Being hysteric or developing a nervous condition became so common that these ailments came to be equated with women. As a result, they were either confined to asylums or forced to lead a domestic life in order to avoid any 'excitement' of their minds. Juliet Mitchell understands hysteria as "the woman's simultaneous acceptance and refusal of the organisation of sexuality under patriarchal capitalism. It is simultaneously what a woman can do both to be feminine and to refuse femininity, within patriarchal discourse." When Gilman was writing, America was heavily influenced by these Victorian values. Her works can be read as a form of resistance against these oppressive ideological systems of morality.

Journal of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics, Vol. 44, No. 1, Spring 2021 [187-194]

© 2021 Vishvanatha Kaviraja Institute, India

"The Yellow Wallpaper," published in 1892, is a first-person narrative in the form of a series of journal entries by an unnamed woman protagonist. She and her husband John have retired to a colonial mansion in America for her treatment. She has acquired a "temporary nervous depression" post-childbirth, which we now know as 'postpartum depression.' In the house, instead of a room that she likes better, she is confined mostly to a nursery upstairs with bars for windows and a filthy yellow wallpaper that holds her attention till the end of the story. The story traces her gradual spiralling from a "slight hysterical tendency" to a woman who completely loses her grasp on reality by the end.

Pratibha Ray's stories are set in the late twentieth-century Odisha. It was a crucial time for the flourishing of women's writing, may it be novels, short stories, poems or nonfiction works. Post-independence, the 1970s and 80s saw an unprecedented rise in feminist works in Odisha. Many of these works turned inwards and explored the female psyche and the inner lives of women. While these women writers were influenced by the feminist movements in the West as well as the movements close to home, their works were informed by a culture that was unique to their experience. These writings were bold, more vocal about gender issues than the earlier writings of the century, and aimed to bring about social change.

"The Eyes" (Originally published in 1980 as "Akhi" in Odia) is a third-person narrative account of a woman named Vimla. It is narrated by a teacher doing his research on psychologically afflicted patients. She is a patient at an asylum in Odisha, and her eyes, "from behind the railing" arrest the narrator whenever he enters the asylum. Vimla has been admitted to the hospital by her husband for erratic behaviour, and her son Raju has run away from home to wait outside the asylum for his mother, who he claims 'is not mad.' By her own admission, Vimla is not mad, but that it's only a pretence to escape the "maniacal torture" she faced at the hands of her husband.

Both stories, though written almost a century apart and situated in different socio-cultural contexts, work around certain similar themes. This paper focuses on the ways in which 'madness' has been used by these two authors to highlight concerns unique to their particular settings as well as issues that travel across borders and time periods. Resisting and rejecting the socially constructed definition of 'madness,' the two women protagonists seek freedom from the oppressive societal conventions that they at first conform to, but ultimately subvert, shocking and startling everyone around them, especially the upholders and perpetrators of these laws. They are constrained physically, emotionally as well as intellectually. Yet both of them feel a strain of unrest within themselves regarding their incomplete lives. Neither is a passive, unthinking recipient of her situation even at the beginning of the stories. The fact that there is an awareness of something not being right itself speaks volumes. That is the first step of liberation; an acknowledgement of the problem for being able to resolve it.

Charlotte Perkins Gilman suffered from postpartum depression, a mental condition that was not properly understood as an illness at the time. The popular remedy then was the "rest-cure treatment," which she found to be ineffective, contrary to what she believed to be the cure: autonomy and 'mental stimulation.' She sent a copy of her story that was inspired by this incident, to the doctor who treated her, Dr Silas Weir Mitchell, for perhaps showing the treatment's futility. Dr Mitchell had advised her to "live as domestic a life as far as possible," to "have but two hours' intellectual life a day," and "never to touch pen, brush or pencil again as long as I lived." This translated to complete avoidance of intellectual stimulation like writing or any creative endeavours, thus stifling self-expression. Similarly, the protagonist of "The Yellow Wallpaper" remarks, "[I] am

absolutely forbidden to 'work' until I am well again. Personally, I disagree with their ideas. Personally, I believe that congenial work, with excitement and change, would do me good." Compartmentalization of 'male reason' and 'female fancy' seems to be at the foundation of this treatment. Showalter uses the term "domestication of insanity," indicating a relation of madness with domestic confinement. The rest-cure treatment proves to be futile and 'counterproductive' as it ends up making the narrator's condition worse. While she may have been a fictional or quasi-autobiographical character, such harmful treatments constituted the reality of many women. In her autobiography, *The Living of Charlotte Perkins Gilman* (1935), Gilman calls her condition an "unbearable inner misery" along with "ceaseless tears."

In "The Yellow Wallpaper," the in-laws, represented by John's sister, check the unnamed narrator's behaviour at regular intervals by validating appropriate behaviour expected from a woman. She dismisses her 'fancy' for journal writing, much like John does, and then herself comes across as an ideal woman, the "angel in the house," as Gilbert and Gubar would say. She is placed in juxtaposition to the 'sick' narrator who is restricted to a room in the house. The sister is the natural descendent of patriarchy, valorising its definitions of womanhood and appropriating other women to fit into the moulds created by their male 'overlords.' A distracted reader might miss the subtle hints from the very beginning about the emotional unavailability and dismissive nature of the husband, John. He is an oppressor who infantilizes his wife and is so discreet in his manner that to an outsider, he would look like a loving husband, spoiling his wife, and calling her endearing names. But what he actually is, is a cold, rational, calculating, practical doctor of mental illnesses, committed to his profession alone; a man of the world. Being her husband as well as her doctor, John makes it more difficult for her to question him. "He combines the diagnostic language of the physician... with the paternalistic language of the husband to create a formidable array of controls over her behavior" (Trieckler). Her brother too is a doctor and supports John's method of treatment. John constantly denies her wish to move to another place where she would heal better. Her own views about her illness are dismissed as fancies and seen as a result of her overthinking. He practically forbids her from thinking at all, or worse, writing! Such restrictions show the deep-seated belief that a woman's thoughts are mere instincts, and a husband thus gets the upper hand. Everything she does is defined by what "John says." He puts himself in a position where he alone can protect his delicate and sick wife. Maysoon Taher Muhi makes an interesting observation in her critical essay. She rightly remarks, "it can be said that the husband defines what sanity to his wife is, and what his wife feels and thinks as insanity." The norm has been defined by men, and if an individual deviates from it, it leads to alienation and ostracization.

"The Eyes" was published at a time when conversations about domestic violence, dowry and equal rights among other gender concerns were taking place in India. In this story, a more explicitly violent male figure is presented. He subjects Vimla to both physical and psychological oppression. It's not difficult to find fault with the oppressor in this story. On being asked about his father, Raju gets startled and takes a minute before "he felt reassured that his father was not actually present." It indicates the trauma and its memory that still torments the child. Not to mention the mental trauma of such a childhood, which would give way to him having a troubled mental state in the future. It is only imaginable how much the wife would have had to bear the brunt of his rage, both on her part and on the behalf of her child. There is a graphic description of the violence Vimla has been a victim of. Raju recalls, "He would beat her till he drew blood. If we started to

cry, he would drag us out of our beds and beat us... To save us from thrashing, Mother would stand and face him like a war goddess." The husband calls her names like "you bitch, you whore," which shockingly is naturalized to an extent in innumerable homes in Indian society along with facing physical abuse at the hands of the in-laws. Vimla gradually loses her physical strength and starts spiralling into mental ailments. It is somewhat unclear as to what extent she is actually ill. But it can't be overlooked that feigning to be psychologically afflicted indicates a more terrifying condition.

Vimla tells her story to the narrator and she claims to be sane, and that it's only an act to escape "the hell" at home, highlighting the bleakness of the situation. She questions who can really be called 'mad.' She asks, "Do you think I was ever insane? There aren't any insane people inside this hospital. It is those on the other side that are deranged and diseased... We can die for love just as we can kill for hatred. While you people are just the opposite." She remarks that the people outside who are pretending to be sad when they are actually happy and the people who are making false promises out of greed and malicious intent, are the ones in real need of help. Her ideas remind one of Manto's "Toba Tek Singh," where the protagonist questions the boundaries and definitions of madness.¹ She declares that none of the inmates is actually mad, rather they are genuine in their laughter, sadness and hatred, unlike the outsiders.

Both forms of violence, physical and psychological, leave an indelible mark on the minds of the women in a different yet similar way. Both are victims. Both, to use the Freudian term, give way to 'repression.'² Both then face the consequences of it. While one actually faces a worsening effect on an already existing mental illness, another reacts and lashes out in quite a different way. Vimla's mind devises a method to escape the oppression in an unconventional way, but something that would easily go unsuspected by society. Society readily believes women to be prone to mental illnesses such as hysteria and nervous breakdowns, while ironically, it fails to understand the causes behind it. Hélène Cixous notes that hysteria is "the nuclear example of women's power to protest." She goes on to say that "The hysteric is, to my eyes, the typical woman in all her force."

The point of departure here is that, unlike "The Yellow Wallpaper," where there are no confidants for the woman other than her journal, in "The Eyes," the figure of a caring son, Raju, a companion to the protagonist, gives a strong sense of emotional support to Vimla. In "The Yellow Wallpaper," all the male characters, including the woman's husband and brother perpetuate male hegemony. While in "The Eyes," the son breaks the chain of ruthless men and stands as a light of hope for a generation of men with a more profound understanding of women's inner worlds. One can also extend this reading to say that Raju is the reason why Vimla's feet are still grounded in reality and she hasn't become completely 'insane.' But sadly, it's insufficient. Even this bond is shaken by the taunts of society, "naturally, if the mother is crazy, how can the son be normal?" So, now the only fear she has is that Raju might also be forcefully admitted to the asylum.

The medical authorities at the asylum validate the healing effects that the care and understanding of loved ones can accomplish on a psychologically afflicted person, but Vimla's husband, they tell the narrator, hadn't "cooperated even a little bit." So, there was very little hope of recovery for this "madwoman" and others like her at the asylum. Like Bertha Mason from *Jane Eyre*, by Charlotte Bronte and *The Madwoman in the Attic*, by Gilbert and Gubar, many such women are locked up and have no other way of expressing than displaying rage, breaking things, or as in the case of Bertha, burning the house down.³ The woman in "The Yellow Wallpaper" does something similar. She too doesn't find a friendly ear in John, and ultimately stops attempting to communicate. She even

goes a step further in claiming that perhaps he is the "reason I do not get well faster." J. Wolter notes, the protagonist "begins to decode the pattern (of her husband and his world), destroys it, and constructs a reading and a world of her own." Finally, in a maddening rage, she tears off the yellow wallpaper, behind which she imagines numerous women like her are trapped.

The use of metaphors and symbolism is abundant in both stories. Both have central metaphors that run throughout the stories. In "The Yellow Wallpaper," the woman's "changing reactions to the wallpaper" indicate the stages of her illness. The wallpaper stands most significantly for its representation of patriarchy. Like patriarchy, it has imprisoned thousands of women over the centuries. The protagonist visualises these trapped women and tries to liberate them by peeling off the wallpaper. She increasingly identifies herself with the 'creeping' women who are oppressed by societal restrictions and with the woman in the wallpaper. Towards the end of the story, it seems that she becomes one with her. In "The Eyes," the complaints of women are reflected in the description of the eyes of Vimla. These eyes are like lips that possess the ability to speak of the oppression they have seen and faced. There are "complaints in those eyes." They are "burning" and "smouldering, harsh eyes." They are also "pleading eyes," that seek help for liberation.

The "youthful dreams" ("The Eyes") and the illusion of a happy married life that both the women protagonists had, is shattered post-marriage. While the unnamed narrator of "The Yellow Wallpaper" has her dreams of an ideal, understanding husband unfulfilled, Vimla on the other hand, also has physical dimensions to her suffering. She feels like "a beast of burden" who has to work without complaining, eating only the bare minimum for survival, which makes the class difference between the two women evident. Her 'insanity' began when she concocted the idea that "if my hands got burnt, I could get some rest. I thrust my hands into the burning coals and lost consciousness." She's doubly oppressed; being a woman, she is oppressed by her husband, and being a victim of poverty, which brings its own struggles for her, she additionally has to face the ire of a frustrated husband.

The class difference also becomes evident in the description of the respective husbands and the family structure. It might also be attributed to a difference in cultural backgrounds. The fact that John is a physician is an integral part of the story. On the other hand, Vimla's husband's profession isn't mentioned and neither does it seem to be significant. It suffices to know that whatever little income he has, he uses to exploit his "evil habits" like drinking. Vimla also has a meagre income which she saves for her children, but that too gets snatched. She has four children to feed. Her body is put through an undesirable number of births, while all she wanted was a small family, which would also have been capable of maintaining financial stability. When she became aware of a fifth child, she "attacked him (her husband), pummelling and pinching his face." She has been in and out of the asylum since then.

The idea of motherhood is the other aspect of marriage that has been explored in different ways in the two stories. In "The Yellow Wallpaper," the new mother is hardly ever shown engaging with the child, which doesn't mean she's apathetic towards it. The child is mostly kept away from the mother, by the caretaker, which actually was the case in most houses in America in the nineteenth century. For instance, the protagonist of Katherine Mansfield's "Bliss" loves her child, but does not get to spend as much time together as she would like, because of other matters she has to attend to.⁴ On the other hand, such a situation was unimaginable in twentieth-century India or even today. The

ideals of motherhood that consist of unconditional love and sacrifice are more strictly adhered to. Vimla truly loves her son, protects him from his abusive father and also opens up to him about her dreams. Raju reminisces, "mother would hold me tight and sob through the night." She wants to make him "a great man," who would be the new ideal man, not butch, violent, cold, and rational, but tender, learned, and one who can "discriminate between good and bad, justice and injustice." No such alternative design for man is provided in "The Yellow Wallpaper."

The ending of both stories is bleak. They end with uncertainty regarding the fate of the characters. "The Yellow Wallpaper" closes with the woman 'creeping' around the room and over her unconscious husband, while in "The Eyes," Vimla has no escape. Ray delves into the lives of the asylum patients and sees the unbreakable chain, where once a woman becomes a patient, there's no returning to normalcy or acceptance by society. The "hospital staff found it impossible to exercise control over her." But is it really a place where she is truly free? In some aspects, she might be, but she may never lead the life she had envisioned for herself and her children. Vimla will forever be stuck at either her house, where she would never be happy nor would society accept her as 'normal' or at the asylum where she doesn't truly belong. She is caught in the vicious circle of an endless journeying back and forth. To add to the bleakness of the situation, her son is admitted to the asylum for attempted violence with his father, who at the end, walks away 'unconcerned.' Helen Small's observation here about Gilman's protagonist, can also be applied to understand Vimla's dilemma, "she [the protagonist(s)] sees the complexity of her situation, but is in no position to do anything about it (except escape it by retreating into herself, by going mad). This reading of the story's end is neither positive nor negative, but ambivalent. 'Madness' is an escape from one kind of cage into another."

"The faint figure behind seemed to shake the pattern, just as if she wanted to get out," observes the unnamed protagonist of "The Yellow Wallpaper." The mode of 'shaking' the pattern of oppression could differ in each woman's situation. The protagonist secretly writes in her journal and the woman trapped behind the wallpaper tries to free herself just as Gilman questions the norms and codes of conduct enforced on women through her writing. By writing and voicing her concerns, she also encourages women readers to question the ways in which they themselves are bound. Women's writing in this respect becomes all the more significant. It presents a perspective that was absent in the male author's representation of women. Unique and unexpected viewpoints come to the fore when women start writing and unfolding their own experiences. It has the ability to shock readers by defying their usual expectations of form and content from a piece of literature, while also exposing a whole new way of viewing reality. Writing, thus, becomes a potent mode of expression for women.

The point where both Ray and Gilman would join hands is the reason why they write. Both confess to being harbingers of social change. Ray stresses the dire need for action through Vimla, who tells the narrator how he can only write an article about her story or give a talk on it that would bring applause, but that won't actually solve her problem. This is a social problem that needs more thought and effective solutions than sympathy. Similarly, Gilman too gave precedence to the importance of social change and divorced her husband who wasn't supportive of her cause. She removed all such obstacles that stopped her from accomplishing this goal.

Gilman, elsewhere, has also shown her distrust in the institution of marriage, whereas Ray doesn't shun the practice per se, but highlights the problems within it and hopes for

them to be remedied. Gilman's other works like *Concerning Children* (1900), *The Home* (1904), and *Human Work* (1904) investigate the position of women at home, who are forced to lead a domesticated life, serving their families as wives and mothers and denied any outlet for their intellect and creativity. In such circumstances, many female authors often employ the trope of madness for expression. In *The Madwoman in the Attic*, Gilbert and Gubar observe that "by projecting their rebellious impulses... into mad or monstrous women (who are suitably punished in the course of the novel or poem), female authors dramatize their own self-division, their desire both to accept the strictures of patriarchal society and to reject them. What this means, however, is that the madwoman in literature by women is... an image of her (the author's) own anxiety and rage... so that female authors can come to terms with their own uniquely female feelings of fragmentation, their own keen sense of the discrepancies between what they are and what they are supposed to be."

The two writers take up the issue of women's writing. Women see writing as a mode of expression, freedom, vocalization of issues, or simply look for a confidant in their diaries and journals. As opposed to the rationality of men, women find an instinctive connection with nature and the mystical and they draw strength from them. Men seem to be threatened by all these aspects and try to restrict women, like Gilman's husband and John in "The Yellow Wallpaper." Luce Irigaray remarks, "[women's] words are never heard... serious scientific discourse and practice remain the privilege of men who have control of politics in general as well as of our most private sphere as women. Everywhere, in everything, men's speech, men's values, dreams and desires are the law. Everywhere and in everything, men define the function and the social role of women, right down to the sexual identity that women are to have or not to have. Men know, men have access to the truth, not us."

The protagonist of "The Yellow Wallpaper" asserts, "I know John would think it absurd. But I must say what I feel and think in some way—it is such a relief!" The fact that she is nameless hints at the universality of women in similar situations who are forced to restrict their voice. Grace Farrell notes, "all female ailments... were connected to the female reproductive organs" and "it was suggested that women's greater participation in intellectual/ mental work would interfere with the proper growth of their reproductive system and thus, affect their 'primary' role as procreators." But actually, the exploration of subjectivity that comes with writing, empowers women to overthrow power structures. That is why Virginia Woolf talks about the necessity of having "A Room of One's Own." A woman must have a creative and literal space all to herself and have economic independence, which Woolf sees as essential in cultivating a feminine subjectivity.⁵ Gilman's *Women and Economics* (1898) also highlights the significance of women achieving financial independence. Not only will it benefit women, but it will also contribute to the growth of society as a whole. This would lead to more women like Gilman and Ray to write about their lives, and those of other women, and tell their untold stories to the world.

Women and women writers who resist, transgress, rebel and dare to defy the norm, always run the risk of being labelled as 'insane,' 'dangerous,' 'hysteric' or 'unnatural.' Being 'abnormal' sets them apart from the community and isolates them. Elaine Showalter observes in *The Female Malady* that "Biographies and letters of gifted women who suffered mental breakdowns have suggested that madness is the price women artists have had to pay for the exercise of their creativity in a male-dominated culture."

Madness, thus, becomes much more than a bodily and mental ailment. For a woman or a woman writer, madness can be an escape, a way of asserting self-identity, a medium of turning inwards to discover the true self or a trope to expose significant issues and realities.

It can provide the space to speak and act in a way that could not have been possible in a 'reality' forged by men and male authors. It may be worthwhile to ponder on psychiatrist Ronald Laing's statement that "madness need not be a breakdown; it may also be a breakthrough."

University of Delhi, India

Notes

- ¹ Manto's short story "Toba Tek Singh" (1955) employed the trope of madness to question the authorities and draw points of comparison between the inmates of the asylum and those residing on the outside.
- ² Freud used the term 'repression' as part of his psychoanalytic theory. It can be defined as "a thought, memory, or feeling [that] is too painful for an individual, so the person unconsciously pushes the information out of consciousness."
- ³ Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* is a significant read for feminist scholars, not just because of the protagonist Jane, but for the character of Bertha Mason, the 'mad' ex-wife of Rochester. Bertha Mason later became a subject of intensive study by Gilbert and Gubar in *The Madwoman in the Attic*.
- ⁴ Mansfield, Katherine. *Bliss and Other Stories*. (Reprinted). Constable & Co., 1923. The protagonist Bertha Young lives in a polite society that places constraints on behaviour and defines codes of conduct. She experiences 'bliss' when she sees her baby, but she is prevented from closely nurturing and raising the child as it is supposed to be the Nurse's job.
- ⁵ Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* (1929) is a seminal work in feminist criticism. She makes the point that "a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction."

Works Cited

- Cixous, Hélène, and Catherine Clément. *The Newly Born Woman*. Trans. Betsy Wing. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991.
- Farrell, Grace. "Engendering the Canon: Women's Narratives, 1865-1914." *A Companion to American Fiction 1865-1914*. Eds. R. P. Lamb and G. R. Thompson. USA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005.
- Gilbert, Sandra M., and Susan Gubar. *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman writer and the nineteenth-century literary imagination*. Yale University Press, 1980.
- Gilman, Charlotte Perkins, and Dale M. Bauer. *Charlotte Perkins Gilman: The Yellow Wallpaper*. Bedford Books, 1998.
- Irigaray, Luce. "Body against Body: In Relation to the Mother" in *French Feminism Reader*. Ed. Kelly Oliver. USA: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2000.
- Laing, Ronald David. *The Politics of Experience; The Bird of Paradise*. Pantheon Books, 1967.
- Mitchell, Juliet. *Women: the Longest Revolution: Essays on Feminism, Literature and Psychoanalysis*. London: Virago, 1984.
- Muhi, Maysoon Taher. "Much Madness is the Divinest Sense: Madness in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's 'The Yellow Wallpaper'." 2010.
- Ray, Pratibha. "The Eyes." *Salvation and Other Stories*. Ed. Aruna Sitiesh. New Delhi: Affiliated East-West Press Pvt. Ltd., 2001.
- Showalter, Elaine. *The Female Malady*. London: Virago Press, 2001.
- Small, Helen. "Madness as a theme in women's literature" in *Literature and Gender*. Ed. Lizbeth Goodman. United Kingdom: Taylor & Francis, 2013.
- Triechler, Paula A. "Escaping the Sentence: Diagnosis and Discourse in 'The Yellow Wallpaper'." *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, 3:1/2, 1984.
- Wolter, Jürgen. "'The Yellow Wallpaper': The Ambivalence of Changing Discourses." *American Studies*, 54:2, 2009.

Auerbach, Tanpınar and Edib in Istanbul: Reinventing the Humanities and Comparative Literature

An Interview with Efe Khayyat on *Istanbul 1940 and Global Modernity:
The World according to Auerbach, Tanpınar, and Edib*

OGUZ TECİMEN

During the last decade ground-breaking studies on Erich Auerbach have appeared in English, reviving the interest in Auerbach's extraordinary work worldwide. Kader Konuk's *East West Mimesis* (2010), for instance, demonstrates the historical, geographical and academic circumstances that conditioned Auerbach's writing of *Mimesis* in Istanbul. Konuk aptly shows how Auerbach's masterpiece is not just a work of exile, as Edward Said and others once argued, but was thoroughly informed by Auerbach's tenure in Istanbul between 1936-1947. As another example, the collection of writings by Auerbach, *Time, History and Literature* (translated by Jane O. Newman, 2013) along with James I. Porter's comprehensive introduction to the volume, covers Auerbach's intellectual trajectory from beginning to end, depicting Auerbach as a multifaceted intellectual (philologist, philosopher, historian, literary critic), and revealing the relevance of Auerbach's work to comparative and world literary studies today. Despite these and many other extraordinary contributions to Auerbach scholarship, there seemed to be something missing in this ever-expanding corpus.

Did Auerbach not have any non-Western colleagues to work with in Istanbul? Did he not have Turkish colleagues at Istanbul University in addition to Turkish students? If Auerbach was the chair of Western languages and literatures at Istanbul University, who taught non-Western literatures and cultures – Turkish, Arabic and Farsi, at least, or English for that matter – at Istanbul University? What were those Turkish scholars doing while Auerbach was working on his masterpieces? What would today's comparative and world literary studies look like if they were read together with Auerbach? *Istanbul 1940 and Global Modernity* (2019) addresses these questions by interpreting Auerbach's work together with the works of his most prominent colleagues during those years: Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar (1901-1962) and Halide Edib (1884-1964). Khayyat claims that, despite the lack of evidence of interaction between these figures and despite the differences concerning their subjects of study, Auerbach, Tanpınar and Edib had similar concerns about the humanist tradition when, they all believed, it was threatened in the East and the West alike by global modernity. Tanpınar was a scholar of Ottoman and Turkish literature as well as a novelist. Edib was an international intellectual and writer dividing her time between Istanbul, Cairo, Beirut, Paris, Delhi, London and New York, among others. They were both born and raised during the last decades of the late Ottoman era and lived through the years when the modern, Republican Turkey took pains at negotiating its Muslim-Oriental past. They were intellectuals in-between,

engaged with both Eastern and Western humanist archives. According to Khayyat, this is what makes them interesting when read side by side with Auerbach, since he argues that Auerbach's account of Western realism, despite focusing exclusively on the Western canon, points to a non-Western, non-Christian horizon with its vision of gradual secularization and "de-Christianization." Khayyat's book not only traverses various histories in the East and West, but also multiple languages from German and French to global English, from Ottoman and modern Turkish to Arabic and Persian. It is undoubtedly a work of history and literary criticism as much as a work of philology and fiction in the spirit of Auerbach.

Before I met Khayyat in Istanbul, I had the opportunity to discuss *Istanbul 1940* with him via e-mail exchanges as I read the book. It was wonderful but also mournful to talk about *Istanbul 1940* in the city where Auerbach, Tanpınar and Edib met almost a century ago. The following interview was conducted after these exchanges and via e-mail over a few months (February-April 2019) between Istanbul where I live and New York where Khayyat lives.

O.T.: *Istanbul 1940* is a unique book, truly one of a kind. I agree with Martin Puchner's statement on the back cover: "This is a book only Khayyat could have written." Could you say a few words about the intellectual trajectory that brought you to *Istanbul 1940*?

E.K.: Thank you, Oğuz, for this opportunity and your kind words. I studied at Istanbul University and in Rome at the Pontificia Università Gregoriana: English philology in Istanbul (the department was founded by Edib) and philosophy in Rome. Once I fancied myself a medievalist: the first thesis I wrote was on Duns Scotus. Writing on Scotus and *haecceitas*, I came across Martin Heidegger, which was my introduction to contemporary philosophy. Then I worked as a translator and an editor for a journal of philosophy for years in Istanbul, published in cultural journals across Europe, and organized numerous conferences and events. I was lucky enough to work with some extraordinary intellectuals during my career in Istanbul, among them Murat Belge, Ferda Keskin, Enis Batur, Aslı Erdoğan, Ali Akay, Hrant Dink... I also traveled a lot before I decided to return to the university.

Then I received an MA in cultural criticism at Bilgi University before heading to New York for my Ph.D. in Comparative Literature and Society at Columbia University. There too I was fortunate enough to be with some extraordinary people. I spent six years with Gayatri Spivak at Columbia; Marc Nichanian and Gil Anidjar have always been there for me, and I worked with Friedrich Kittler in Berlin. David Damrosch was kind enough to co-organize with me the first meeting of Harvard's Institute for World Literature in Istanbul in 2009. Şeyla Benhabib has always been incredibly generous... and then there is Orhan Pamuk: we worked together both in Istanbul and in New York. Anyway, I could continue to drop names, but let me stop here. You get the idea. I'm not entirely sure what exactly these larger than life figures from different milieux contributed to what you call my "intellectual trajectory," but I know that I owe them, and that each one of them marked the way I think. I traveled a lot after going back to the university too: I taught in Germany and France before receiving my Ph.D. And since I started teaching at Rutgers, I've lectured across the world: in the UK, India, China, Switzerland and Serbia etc. Long story short, a circuitous route brought me to where I am, thanks to number of coincidences and some luck, the generosity of many friends and colleagues, and perhaps my inability to stay put.

O.T.: *Istanbul 1940* is an extremely ambitious book that strikes the reader from the very first sentence: "I wish I could start where Erich Auerbach left off and write a book that, like *Mimesis*, 'may be cited as an illustration' of how history is better off as fiction." Let us start with where Auerbach left off. The final chapter of Auerbach's *Mimesis* deals with modernist fiction. Towards the end of the book, Auerbach suggests that the fragmentary, perspectivist form of the modernist novel informs his own historical-philological method as well. You show that he contrasts this method with the totalizing methods of what he calls "historical sciences." Totalizing and positivist social sciences versus fragmentary and imaginative historical philology... It seems that this is where Auerbach left off. But where, in your opinion, did Auerbach really leave off? Considering the academic habitus that a scholar of comparative literature is currently involved in, why do you think it is not possible to realize your wish today?

E.K.: You are right, I don't think that it's easy to start where Auerbach left off because of the way we study culture today. The kind of literary criticism we practice and teach today seems to me to be quite regressive and far less political. Think of his signature style: that understated tone that marks all of his writings. I can tell you from my classroom experience that those reading him for the first time often find his excruciating attention to detail, accompanied by his monotonous, nonchalant voice, terribly boring. I think all this is sheer irreverence and an expression of humility at once on his part. On the one hand, he merely performs literary criticism, always with a keen eye on style, like a well-behaving, if also a little boring, university professor. On the other hand, his criticism draws conclusions that gradually shape an understanding of our political history, an intellectual history of our global modernity. Moreover, literary history as he conceived it, is at the same time history of religion. His attention to style teaches us something new about the relation of faith and fiction to reality, and the relation of politics to religion, not only in the modern world but since time immemorial! Critics often observe that he wrote histories of mentalities, what they mean is that Auerbach drafted an intellectual history of our present, of the modern subject – a genealogy of the mental theatre of modernity.

Auerbach thought he could do this as a philologist or as a man of letters, but not simply because he prioritized his field over and against other fields of study. It's not that philology is better or more truthful than philosophy, history, political science, or sociology. His philology offered truths of a different order. He did consider his critique an heir to *Geisteswissenschaften*, but at the same time he was completely aware of the belatedness of such approach. In other words, he did not employ what you call the "totalizing methods" of the nineteenth-century European mind, while still providing a "total" view of things. He sought to avoid the loudness, the authoritarian certitude of the nineteenth-century European mind by allowing his method for humanistic inquiry to be informed by the literary in the modern sense, by inviting a degree of fiction into his strictly historical account. That is what I find fascinating about his ambitions and his understatements. For him, practicing modernist philology was to do what *Geisteswissenschaften* once did, but without any claim whatsoever to scientific, philosophical, or other authority or certitude. Practicing philology or literary criticism in the twentieth century, then, is to step back from Auerbach's perspective, to relinquish scientific authority to claim the license to say anything and everything and in every possible way. This is how Derrida once defined literature by the way, describing his own somewhat literary technique as an effort "to say anything and everything and in every

possible way," and pointing out that the modern institution of literature overflows, opposes to, or even seeks to undo institutionality. There you see the reason why I take Auerbach's equation of his philological method to the method of the modernist novel as essential in doing his work justice. Nowadays though, even in literature departments where we assign bits and pieces of Auerbach's writings to our students, disciplinary organization and specialization are but *sine qua non*. Everyone wants to be loud, certain, exact etc.

O.T.: Perhaps against this kind of disciplinary "institutionality", you also state in the opening paragraph that your book "involves a degree of fiction." It may seem as a shocking statement for a scholarly book of this caliber. Perhaps you gave us an off-the-beaten-path and rather imaginative type of scholarly book like Auerbach's? Except for your tremendous endnotes and bibliography, of course.

E.K.: This is a book about three intellectuals – Auerbach, Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, and Halide Edib (Adivar) – who got together in Istanbul in the year 1940, working at the same institution and pursuing the same goal for years, which was to modernize and Europeanize that institution. In the nineteenth century, that institution, or the *Darülfünun*, was conceived of as the non-European equivalent of the European university. Its Europeanization at this point in time coincides with the darkest hour of European history, accompanied by unrest, violence, and destruction taking hold of the entire world.

These intellectuals posed themselves as always looking at the larger world, the world beyond Istanbul while writing their histories in pursuit of their common goal. Yet for each of them that background of a larger world was something different. For Auerbach it was the West, for Tanpınar and Edib it was the Orient, Muslim Orient or the East at large. Although they worked together and they all worked to explain how and why they had found themselves at their moment in (European or Europeanizing) history, and even though they had similar methods, as the book shows, they did not and could not feed one another intellectually, at least not on the surface.

We have hardly any comments in their writings about one another. This does not mean that they did not complement each other, though. That is why being a little imaginative, some digging into depths is necessary to place them next to one another retrospectively. Bringing them together, interpreting their writings together today draws different pictures of their lifeworlds and enables new ways of viewing their legacies. It provides a more complete view of the world and the world-historical moment they approached from different angles but from the common point of view of their meeting place in Istanbul. It also provides a more complete view of what they took literature and critique to be. All this, I believe, has a lot to teach our present in so far as the world historical moment of these critics' narratives has shaped and continues to shape our present.

O.T.: To begin with Auerbach's take on the matter in question: he sets out to write a millennia-long cultural history with a peculiar "synthetic perspectivism" ("conception synthétique et quasi-métaphysique des forces historique" in Auerbach's parlance), which is his own brand of philological method, as you point out, "something akin to a general *Geisteswissenschaft*." This, you argue, "required him to write histories without being a historian, develop a philosophy of history without being a philosopher, think deeply about religion without being a theologian, elaborate on the social and political conditions of life without being a sociologist, and so on." It seems to me that your statement about Auerbach perfectly describes the position of the comparatist in today's university.

E.K.: As I said, Auerbach sometimes strikes me as simultaneously irreverent and humble. You are right in that the finest comparatists of our time occupy similar positions intellectually, among them you could count Edward Said, who reintroduced Auerbach to a global audience a few decades ago. There are many others, of course. But they are all oppositional figures. They achieve what they achieve despite the institutional constraints of the contemporary academia and all sorts of other institutionalized biases. I mean, as comparatists, we do not work to train Edward Sais in the contemporary university. Of course, great critics continue to emerge, but again, as figures of opposition. My observation that it's not easy start where Auerbach left off was meant to point out the oppositional, *irreverent* aspect of his thought.

O.T.: I can see your point about Auerbach's humility, despite his own totalizing claims. But how was it possible for Auerbach to assign primacy to literature in "engaging reality," as you point out in the book, while heavily depending on other fields and not prioritizing his own field?

E.K.: Auerbach interprets all sorts of texts, and all sorts of genres of writing, in *Mimesis* and other works that I discuss. He reads sacred texts, history, philosophy, fiction and autobiography, sociology and psychology etc. But he reads texts in terms of their contribution to the development of realism. He views modern literature as a crucial moment in the history of realist reception and representation, even as the peak of that history. That history begins with the Bible, slowly evolves into literature in the modern sense, which in turn paves the way to "historical sciences" – in his vocabulary – and modernist fiction. It is the realism of modern literature, the "synthetic perspectivism" that modern men and women of letters distill from Christian realism that informs our contemporary realisms, including what Auerbach calls historical-scientific realism.

The Bible carries the seeds of literary realism, then, and the historical sciences are an offshoot of literary realism, which is to say that the sciences of the social and contemporary modernist literature are cross-breeds. While Christianity is one step behind literature in its realism, historical sciences overshoot the destination. With Christianity we lack perspectivism, which renders Christian realism tyrannical, and with the historical sciences of modernity we lack the synthesis which renders historical scientific knowledge fragmentary.

Regardless, again, modernist literature and historical sciences are nineteenth-century cross-breeds, they are heirs to literary realism, in Auerbach's mind. So he does not rely on historical sciences, but rather either points at their shortcomings, or – while praising them for their realism – shows how they could not have come to existence without literary realism and its "synthetic perspectivist" imaginary. If this is still prioritizing literature over other ways of accounting for reality, you should note what underlies the literary method and the literary knowledge that it produces. Literary knowledge is neither verifiable – i.e. it does not claim scientific authority – nor is it tyrannical. Nor does the literary method – the way I describe it in different contexts in the book: regressive, Dionysian, etc – lend itself to power-knowledge in a manner that is comparable to the historical-scientific methods. This is to say that the priority of literature here is due to the resignation it enables – resignation from power-knowledge.

O.T.: I agree that literature or literary knowledge taken in that sense does not readily lend itself to power/knowledge, unless, perhaps, we take into account their potential instrumentalization. More on this shortly. Let us first revisit Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar and Halide Edib's take on the matter at hand. You claim that they display

an intellectual attitude similar to Auerbach's. As his colleagues in Istanbul University in the 1940s, having been disturbed by the "cultural erosion" accompanying Turkey's Europeanization, they "wrote histories of non-European humanisms." Since there is no direct interaction between them, what are your grounds for imagining affinities between these three figures?

E.K.: Well, first of all, my goal was not to show or claim that these three intellectuals influenced one another. Such an argument would not be worth making anyway. It would have been difficult to prove too. After all, they studied different traditions. Yet their ambitions and reservations mirror each others'. The impossible scopes of their intellectual histories – from Homer to Woolf, or from the *Mu'allaqat* to Nâzım Hikmet – mirror one another as well. Despite having directed their gazes in different directions – Auerbach to the West, Tanpınar the Muslim Orient, and Edib at once further East and further West – it is clear that they were responding to the same moment in history, from Istanbul where they worked together, and with the same concerns. This is why I thought it was even more interesting that they ignored one another – apart from some general comments they made, which could as well be interpreted as anti-Semitic in Tanpınar's case, by the way, biased in different ways in Auerbach's and Edib's cases.

They were all in a hurry to salvage what they could from their respective archives right where they all thought was the end of history. Perhaps that is why they didn't have the time to study each others' works. Regardless, that is one of their meeting place in their minds – right at the end of a world. But there are other meeting points. Another is, I argue, the space of literature, of modern literature. Because as humanists and literary critics, they all reacted to the methods of modern disciplinary history and social sciences in the same way, and they all seemed to have a similar understanding of the literary method, or literature as method, as it were. While working to recreate an outdated, still very much "Oriental" educational institution in the image of the modern European university, they had the opportunity to rethink the university and the humanities at the end of times – right at the end of Europe from Auerbach's perspective, at the end of the Islamicate civilization from Tanpınar's and Edib's perspectives. I would go so far as to argue that they together, that is, as a collective, even reinvented the European humanities. Unfortunately only Auerbach's portion of greater invention has reached us to pioneer cultural criticism and comparative literature as we practice them today. Imagine what comparative literature would have looked like if Auerbach had reached us as part of the collective I study – or what other disciplines and fields of study would have emerged if Tanpınar and Edib had reached us together with Auerbach. As you see one *must* be imaginative to do these critics justice.

O.T.: Let us continue with Tanpınar. Tanpınar sets out to account for Turkey's Islamicate past when the modern Turkish Republic was making an enormous effort to leave behind its Ottoman past. The most crucial development of this era was perhaps the adoption of Roman letters (1928) and the "purification" of Turkish language that followed, which would gradually deprive Turkish of Arabic and Persian influences. All this meant the suppression of the Ottoman "archive," archive in the sense of a "civilizational library," as you put it, one that articulates a particular way of "sensing and feeling, thinking and telling." You argue that Tanpınar wrote his seminal work on Ottoman-Turkish literature, *XIX. Asır Türk Edebiyatı* ("19th Century Turkish Literature," 1949), to inquire what remained – and perhaps could (not) possibly remain – of that archive in European Turkey.

In Auerbach's case what is at stake was the destruction of Western humanist tradition (or "archive," as you put it) and the leveling of cultural differences in a globalizing world. In Tanpınar's case what is at stake was the ambivalent presence of the Islamicate past at the moment of a Westernized present without a history. Whereas Auerbach's Western humanist tradition begins with the Bible and ends up with gradual "de-Christianization", Tanpınar's humanism not only affirms Western humanistic values, yet it is also ambivalently informed by what he himself calls the "Muslim Oriental" legacy. Tanpınar's project seems to be much more difficult than Auerbach's since he tries to find the convergences between these two different – and somewhat antinomical – traditions. Would you agree?

E.K.: These critics had to take into consideration the catastrophes – from the Holocaust to the Partition, the Armenian genocide to pogroms, countless catastrophes taking place around them as they figured out what shape the European humanities would take in a new era in this part of the "Europeanizing non-Europe." Neither modernity nor tradition appeared the same during those tumultuous times. Modernity did not appear to be capable of delivering its promises in the face of unprecedented corruption, deceit, violence and destruction across the world. In the meantime, once looked-upon traditions of the past came into view differently in retrospect. Long story short, from the perspective of these critics, for better or worse, it was possible and perhaps even necessary to view with a fresh eye modernity and the tradition, histories of technology and religion, of culture, politics and fiction. Theirs is a moment of awakening, of a latter-day-enlightenment, as it were, when they had to shed their inherited wisdom and all their prejudices, and start from scratch as they set to work to interpret texts modern and traditional – an entire human history dating back to time immemorial.

The kind of openness they nurtured and even developed into a method for literary and cultural critical inquiry is just exemplary. It is because we fail to interpret the work of this collective as what it is that the complete picture of the attitude in question has long escaped our attention. Auerbach has long been accused of being Eurocentric, for instance, while it's really easy to accuse Tanpınar and Edib of conservatism and biases of all sorts. But I think Auerbach's task was as difficult as Tanpınar's, to address your question directly.

Tanpınar and Auerbach both found convergences, as you say, or overlaps between the promises of modernity and the horizon of the respective traditions they traced. Both Auerbach and Tanpınar were ultimately interested in the political horizon of the traditional, religious trajectories they traced. The Biblical revolution, in Auerbach's case, and the Quranic revolution, in Tanpınar's (and to a certain extent Edib's) case, are turning points in the history of "the rise of more extensive and socially inferior human groups to the position of subject matter for problematic-existential representation" (in Auerbach's very own words). But I think your hunch is right in that it is easier for us to understand Auerbach's core argument, while Tanpınar's and Edib's observations on Islamicate pasts and presents are shadowed today by our prejudices and inherited wisdoms. Tanpınar's criticism is not available in English, there is that issue to begin with: but *XIX. Asır Türk Edebiyatı* was published in French, recently, so Western (and American) audiences are getting more and more familiar with his criticism. *A Mind at Peace (Huzur)* and *The Time Regulation Institute (Saatleri Ayarlama Enstitüsü)* and some other fictional writings came out in English recently, but his essays, which are crucial to the story that *Istanbul 1940* tells, have not been translated into any Western language.

O.T.: Let us go back to the late 19th century Ottoman literature then, to the period that engendered the “crisis.” The section titled “Quixotic Turks” in your book opens with Ahmed Midhat (1844-1912), arguably the greatest novelist of the Tanzimat era. He wrote a novel titled *Don Quixote in Istanbul* (1877) that attempts to adopt *Don Quixote* into Ottoman reality and morals, with a view to assimilate this European into the Ottoman society or life-world. You argue that as a literary phenomenon *Don Quixote in Istanbul* remained without much impact but Don Quixote himself would become a crucial figure for the revolutionary Young Turks. After Young Turks seized the power in 1909, Ömer Seyfeddin (1884-1920) would rise in the literary scene to denounce Midhat’s way of engaging Don Quixote as Hamletism. You show how Seyfeddin would go so far as to embrace Don Quixote in opposition to Midhat’s and Ottoman intelligentsia’s Hamletisms – his truly mad strategy culminating in his call to Turks “to become a nation like Greeks, like Armenians, like Jews, or like any other nation on the face of this earth.” This call would soon overshoot its destination as radical Turkish nationalism, eventually leading to catastrophes for the Armenians, Greeks and Jews living in the Ottoman territory. And as you point out: “the silent, literary writing of the sort Tanpınar praises, the one that renders writing *representing*, would turn into *literally* writing – writing on the ‘flesh of the world’ as Rancière would say.” This is one of the most striking moments in your book that shows the political stakes of literary translation and representation, of mimesis in a way. But taking my cue from your comments on the Don Quixotism of Turkish nationalism, I would like to pose a somewhat related question. Don Quixote, a fiction as he may be, does real things in Turkey. You argue that the Orientalist fiction of the terrible “Turk,” i.e. the Turk as the fabulous and horrifying, stereotypical Oriental, did real things in Europe and to Europe as well. What do you mean when you say Europe has “also turn[ed] somewhat Oriental, somewhat Turk” in the process of “Europeanizing the non-European world”?

E.K.: The section on Don Quixote in the second part of the book (which is at the same time a discussion of Tanpınar’s *ikilik*), and the section on Hamlet in part three (which is dedicated to Edib), both address the question of the political stakes of literary representation. Part one (on Auerbach) addresses the same question more generally and also with reference to *Don Quixote* and *Hamlet* in particular, so these sections build on each other. The sections on Turkish *Don Quixote* and *Hamlet* also address the question of the political (or politico-theological, if I may) stakes of literary translation. I look at the relation of translation to conversion.

Remember that *Mimesis* displays an unwavering sympathy for and intellectual commitment to the everyday, common life—to the life of the majority of the people living on the face of the earth, or simply the “multitude.” For Auerbach, until the Gospels, only the shiniest and the greatest – the strongest men, prettiest women, biggest swords and longest beards etc – could make difference; only the shiniest could make enough difference to be perceived as worth remembering. Only the shiniest made it to the stories people shared with each other about themselves and one another. The pagan mind simply lacked the means to do any better. First the Gospels overcome this mindset. First the fishermen of Galilee climb up to the stage of (tragic) representation, playing major roles in the greatest tragedy of all time, that of salvation. After that, the more common life, or the life of the real and simple majority of humans, seeps into human consciousness to mark our stories and books, the more realist those stories, books, and our reception of ourselves become. This is how an entire Western-European

civilization evolves in Auerbach. First the fishermen of Galilee climb up to the stage, but then come others – book by book other peoples and parts of the world climb upon the same stage as the history of the European humanities evolves.

The story that Auerbach narrates after the Gospels is the history of the transformation and adjustment of the Christian mind to the real, larger world. So we have a series of conversions in Auerbach's account of realism and its globalization: first conversion to Christianity and out of the mental theater of antiquity at the dawn of Western realism, and then a history of conversion out of Christianity as the history of Western realism all the way to our present. Now both *Don Quixote* and *Hamlet* have important roles to play in this latter history of what Auerbach also calls "de-Christianization," but I will not get into the details of this now. What I want to remind you here is that given what I have said thus far, it must be clear that there is no history of Western realism, in Auerbach's mind, without the non-Christian. One of the things the book does is to show that Auerbach quite often emphasizes the cathartic effects of the Christian-European exposure to the non-European-Christian world. Christian-European civilization evolves in such a way that it continuously embraces, accepts as is, "devours" as Valéry would say, or incorporates the non-Christian, the non-European – by gradually "turning Turk," to a certain extent.

I know that you find this latter conclusion of mine rather imaginative, and you may be right. It's just that this is the only way I can interpret Auerbach, for the better or the worse, and whether what I do amounts to "supplementing" rather than interpreting or not. But there is more. How does this expansion of the European mind, this de-Christianization work? Through real interventions: through exchanges, travels, translations etc. Through contact with the non-Western world, first merely imagined, and then real. Obviously these real and imagined "contacts" do not leave the non-Western world untouched. This is to say that de-Christianization does not and cannot take place in a vacuum of sorts, but has immediate implications beyond Christianity and Europe that slowly engulf the entire world. From the perspective of Tanpınar's and Edib's part of the world, this same space where Europe moves beyond itself is the space of modernization, Europeanization, and to a certain extent, yes, Christianization. There is then a correlation between non-Western modernization and de-Christianization, that is if we must stick to this conceptual vocabulary of dichotomies etc. In reality what we have is more identity than two correlating movements.

I look at *Don Quixote* and *Hamlet* in Ottoman-Turkish translation to show how "Europeanization of non-Europe" is a moment in European history as it is a moment in other cultural trajectories, on the one hand; and on the other to see how far the process of de-Christianization could evolve in reality. One could use a different, perhaps more academic vocabulary to make this same case – and it was indeed done in many different genres of writing and academic disciplines. What our triumvirate (I guess being Turkish, and studying Turkish modernity, I have a fixation on "triumvirates") enables me to do is to come up with a summary judgment in plain tongue (if I may) after a bird eye's view of the cultural history of globalization that these intellectuals themselves produced in their criticism. I came to the observations on "globalization" or global modernity ("in the singular," as Dirlik taught us) that I share with you now after reading Auerbach, Tanpınar and Edib along with their archives. I did write some additional chapters that I could not include in full in the book: a chapter called "The Quranic Revolution" that responds to Auerbach's thought of a Biblical revolution,

another one called "Who Killed Beşir Fuad," and yet another titled "Hiç" that traces a cultural trajectory from calligraphic writing to Samipaşazade Sezai's realism. These chapters will be collected in another book, I hope. What *Istanbul 1940* does is to interpret Auerbach, Tanpınar, and Edib's collective work as the tip of an iceberg.

O.T.: The conception of modernity or globalization in the singular also appears in the title of your book: *Istanbul 1940 and Global Modernity*. I find it significant because I believe that one of the implications of the – by now somewhat outdated – discourse on "alternative modernities" is risking marginalization of the configurations of modernity beyond Europe. From that perspective, it is so easy to interpret non-Western modernities in isolation or as if they were not a matter of concern for the European, as if this process called modernization were simply a unilateral dissemination from Europe to the rest of the world. In other words, "modernities in the plural" may lead one to ignoring the Western involvement in the history of non-European modernization. I believe that taking modernity in the singular, the way Arif Dirlik and you do, is not reductive or essentialist because it leads us to viewing modernity in transnational and translingual contexts rather than as national and monolingual cases.

Now let's turn to Halide Edib (1884-1964) to analyze the complexity of this *singular* and global modernity. I too think that as an international public intellectual committed both to the Eastern and Western humanist archives, she is the "liveliest" and at the same time most challenging figure in your book. As you suggest: "[Her] world is larger than Auerbach's and Tanpınar's combined and extends from her hometown of Istanbul to Cairo and Beirut, and from there to Paris, Delhi, London, and New York. [...] Edib's world-view is closer to the perspective we have today on the cultural history of global modernity and world literature." You add that although she, like Auerbach, was interested in the "spiritual foundations of life in common [...] her thoughts on the human spirit risks reducing difference to mere masques." She also nurtures many antithetical ideas about modernization such as seeing "Westernization and nationalization being simultaneously re-Islamization." What kind of potentials and promises do you see in Edib in particular?

E.K.: It is worth noting that Edib has a history of exile, like Auerbach, first in Europe and then in the East as well – further East in India, where she taught alongside Gandhi and Iqbal, among others. I think one of the most original aspects of Edib's thought – but also Auerbach's and Tanpınar's – on their common present, on that moment of global modernity that they addressed from Istanbul, is that they perceived it critically while resisting provincialisms and simplistic anti-modernisms. It is all too easy to view non-Western modernity as a process whereby, for better or worse, alien elements, ideas, and agents of European modernity affect (or infect, depending on how one feels about things, I guess) traditional bodies. It must have been much easier to go that way for Edib. But like Auerbach and Tanpınar, she provides us with a different model. The book explains why and how, from Auerbach's perspective, European Turkey is not some prosthetic form but part of the European body. It is true that Turkish modernity sometimes looks like a cancerous growth from Auerbach's perspective, but I will not get into that now.

Edib, like Auerbach, turned to the "spiritual foundations" enabling not only European modernity but also non-European Europeanization, which is how she could think of Westernization as simultaneously Islamization. This latter pattern of thought is as old as Ottoman-Turkish modernity – already Young Ottomans thought that Islam was always

already democratic, that democratization was to be pursued in the name of the tradition, in the name of Islam etc. Edib plays with that pattern of thought, looking at non-European Europeanization from beyond Turkey, from a place very close to our moment of global modernity. Her "Spirit" – human spirit – was born in the East, in India to be precise, as pure spirit in time immemorial. As the Spirit travels Westbound on a journey to settle in the world, it overshoots its destination in the history of an initially "spiritual" Christianity. It turns into an "over-emphasis on matter," in Edib's terminology, on material gain and worldly power, to shape the modern Western mind, colonialism, and politics over time. But the pendulum continues to swing back Eastbound in the mean time, offering a corrective to this movement, and finds an equilibrium point where human spirit settles most comfortably in the human body with the Islamic moment in the history of the spirit. Then again, the Muslim spirit gets caught in an Eastbound trajectory, ending up with an "over-emphasis on the spirit," forsaking the material world altogether over the course of the history of Islam. This latter movement means handing worldly power on a silver platter to colonial powers or Oriental despots. Edib says an Englishman once told her that "'Christianity was Eastern in essence (because of its emphasis on the soul), we have Westernized it; Islam was Western in essence (because of its emphasis on society), you have Easternized it'."

Now, Edib lectured on Spirit in India – her history of Spirit is not only that of Christianity and Islam, but it is true that she looks at these two "spiritual movements" as exemplary. These exemplary moments have implications for all the peoples of the East and the West in her mind. Regardless, working with this metaphor of a grandfather clock, I wanted see where the pivot might be. I wanted to understand what exactly enabled Edib's thought of a global history of the human spirit, which provides an account of the multiple cultural historical trajectories leading to the conditions she observed at her own moment of global modernity. I soon noticed that being a woman of English letters meant a great deal for her thought – what enabled her to teach in India, for instance, was precisely her embeddedness in the Anglophone cultural universe. Remember that she first wrote and published her memoirs in English (in 1926) – not French, Arabic or Turkish. I can say more, but to make a long story short, soon I began to read Edib's writings as English literature. What the book does is to interpret Edib as perhaps one of the first voices of global English, or as an early figure of "English as a cultural system," as Aamir Mufti calls it. So in the book, we move from European Turkey being a moment in European history to Edib's writings being English literature. While the history of Turkish Europeanization was heavily marked by Francophile modernity, when we meet Edib in Istanbul, we find ourselves in a new world whose center is no longer Paris. I think Edib's writings, but also her figure as an intellectual, are most instructive for an in depth analysis of English as a cultural system, and its implications for South to South relations. For instance, she enables me to give an account of Turkish Indias, of what becomes of India in Turkish imagination over the course of Turkish Europeanization and its different stages.

O.T.: To conclude, I would like to turn to Orhan Pamuk, since your account of global modernity culminates in his work. It has almost become a commonplace to read Turkish modernization through the concept of "belatedness," which has been a major influence on Turkish intellectuals' interpretation of their own case since the appearance of Gregory Jusdanis's *Belated Modernity and Aesthetic Culture* (1991). However, you have a different take on the concept of "belatedness." You take your cue from the Turkish

expression "*sonradan görme*" with all its rich connotations ("literally 'the one who has not seen (it) before'" or more properly, "Johnny-come-lately, social climber or nouveau riche, or better still *arriviste*") to interpret Pamuk as a "newcomer" on the stage of global letters. Pamuk leads you to a radical conclusion in the final paragraph of your book: "What does it mean to be oneself, European, a novelist, modern or even 'human' [...] if not to pretend to be oneself, European, a novelist, modern or even 'human'?" I think this rhetorical question about the performance (and "the performative" more generally) gives us the political horizon of your book. Can you say a few words about what distinguishes Pamuk as a "newcomer" from his "belated" predecessors (Ziya Pasha, Ahmed Midhat, Seyfeddin and Tanpınar) in your account of Turkish modernization?

E.K.: I write on the issue of late modernity in different contexts, first to juxtapose Faiz Ahmad Faiz's and Edib's modernisms. With Pamuk I look at a different aspect of what is deemed belated modernity, one that is not often of interest to critics. I assume you would agree here if I said, telegraphically, that Ottoman and Turkish modernity was first of all rushed – that everyone familiar with Turkish modernity can observe how alarm and haste marked its entire history. So much so that even during the early republican era one seldom comes across with the sort of calm that enabled Tanpınar, for instance, to look back to see how far it had gone. I think Pamuk owes a lot, as he himself admits, to Tanpınar's calm – to Tanpınar's pause, as it were, which I alternatively address as an intellectual impasse. While Tanpınar's cultural history is at once an act of mourning, turning into some "intellectual directionlessness" (as Auerbach would say) at times to paralyze his thinking on the future of Turkish modernity and even his own acts of literature, the generations of writers and intellectuals following Tanpınar, including Pamuk, managed to overcome Tanpınar's melancholy.

So I treat Pamuk as a yardstick of sorts, if you don't mind my saying so. Tanpınar's cultural history did recognize the enormity of the destruction and cultural erosion that accompanied modernization in Turkey. His criticism and fiction also acknowledged the radical changes still taking place in modern Turkey, along with their inevitability within the logic of what appears to be a form of globalization. Yet even in Tanpınar there is a sense of insufficiency and immaturity to Turkish modernity. Even in Tanpınar, it is as if something were missing, some secret ingredient remained yet to be discovered for Turks to turn properly modern and European. Walking, talking, thinking and feeling, reading and writing like modern Europeans just did not suffice. Like his predecessors, Tanpınar believed that Turkish modernity lacked authenticity, that it was all but performance, merely pretense. What that secret ingredient might be, what was needed for the authenticity of the sort they had in mind, we may never know. But we do know that Tanpınar did not think that he himself had managed to become a modern man of letters. In his diaries he also explains that things could have been different for him had he been born somewhere in Europe. Regardless, I look at Pamuk's and his predecessors' writings to ask how Turkish literature might have overcome this issue of authenticity and immaturity to pave the way to writers and thinkers such as Pamuk. I read Pamuk to see what he has to teach us about being and pretending, doing and performing, belief and deed. It is in this context that I ask, suggesting that Pamuk would have wanted us to ask: "What does it mean to be oneself, European, a novelist, modern or even 'human' [...] if not to pretend to be oneself, European, a novelist, modern or even 'human'?" I think that this rhetorical question sums up Pamuk's discoveries about modernity and Turkish literature and explains what distinguishes Pamuk from his predecessors.

Book Reviews

JOAN OF ARC ON THE STAGE AND HER SISTERS IN SUBLIME SANCTITY (Bernard Shaw and His Contemporaries). By John Pendergast. Switzerland AG: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019. 281 pp.

Joan of Arc remains a personality who constantly creates a feeling of enigma and intrigue among the literary historians and writers. It has been reported that when she was first admitted to examination before a body consisting of clergy and administrative officials before the Poitiers episode, she is said to have observed: "In the name of God, I have not come to Poitiers to give signs; but take me to Orleans, and I will show you signs" ("Pierre Duparc, trans., *Proces en nullite de la condamnation de Jeanne d'Arc* (Paris, 1986), IV: 15). Interestingly, Archbishop Jacques Gelu of Embrun endorsed to her point of view with a condition that Joan must wear men's clothing if she were to live among soldiers. This episode came to my mind while reading this book. The author has made a mention of how his sister (also named Joan) "found a natural hero in Joan of Arc. She dressed up as Joan of Arc when we were little, and I was very jealous of the sword, shield, and banner my mother made for her". (v)

The first chapter, 'The Palimpsest of Euripides, Shakespeare, and Voltaire', discusses Schiller's attempt to recreate a new perspective, reworking on the life of Joan. The Oxford English Dictionary defines a palimpsest as a manuscript or piece of writing on which later writing has superimposed or effaced earlier writing, or something reused or altered but still bearing visible traces of its earlier form (*OED*, 2010). It is clear that a palimpsest is the product of layering that results in something as new, whilst still bearing traces of the original. Palimpsest was originally "A paper or parchment on which the original text has been partly erased or effaced to allow a new text to be written, leaving fragments of the original still visible" (Macey 2000: 288). Gerard Genette uses the term to refer to Marcel Proust's modernist novel *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu* as a form of intertextuality (Macey 2000:289). The palimpsestic technique of writing means the writing of a new text on the layers of the old, traditional (pre)text by the operation of which it acquires a new meaning. Here Pendergast sets out to create "a more powerful character who suffers at the hands of fate but changes history by sheer force of will" (2). The author finds the use of the concept of "sublime sanctity" in Schiller's depiction of Joan. Schiller must have been inspired by the characterization of Iphigenia made famous by Euripides in *Iphigenia among the Taurians* and *Iphigenia in Aulis*. To make things clear, Pendergast has given the list of the primary sources that are discussed in the subsequent sections, which include nine prominent authors who lived between 413 BCE to 1923 AD.

Referring to the historical evidences of Joan's trial, the author specifically points out the services of Quicherat to bring out the true story of Joan of Arc and the development of research material on her public life. The writer establishes that Joan of Arc has much

in common with Iphigeneia at a structural level similarity. 'A virgin is entrusted with a mission by a virginal supernatural personality to put to death unwanted foreign visitors. Regarding Shakespeare's Joan, she cannot be considered a tragic protagonist and her role is actually much more a stereotype, surviving from medieval miracle and mystery plays. Pendergast observes that Shakespeare's Joan is duplicitous and seems to contradict herself in ways which make her character not only unsympathetic but also unbelievable. The third part in this section deals with Voltaire's *Pucelle*. The vicious satire centering on virginity is also taken into consideration.

The second chapter, 'Sublime Sanctity: Schiller's New Tragic Joan', discusses how Schiller became well versed with the "Euripidean method" by learning the Classics and how each Act of his play evolved out of his diligent work and meticulous research. Pendergast has done a detailed analysis of each sequence with a specific focus on the idea of sublimity that is revealed in the play. The analysis concludes with the statement that "Johanna is not Joan, after all, nor does she need to be. Schiller created a character who thrilled his audience, even as she thrills the other characters in the play with her...Schiller is not trying to teach us history. He is, in fact, not trying to teach us at all. He is showing us that we can learn. What we can learn from Johanna is that she achieves her sanctity—and we perceive it—only after the sublime experience of her suffering." (75).

The third chapter, 'Lacuna and Enigma: Verdi's *Giovanna d'Arco* in Light', discusses about the opera Verdi wrote based on Schiller's *Jungfrau von Orleans*: *Giovanna d'Arco*. One interesting question that he discusses is that "what prevented Germans from making Schiller's plays into operas". He then moves on to the point raised by Wagner in this context. "In Oper und Drama, Wagner offers at least two compelling reasons for his avoidance of Schiller: He felt that Schiller tended to emphasize the details of history over their potential dramatic impact, and even when he seized the dramatic essence, tended to give greater priority to form than content" (86). The author adds, "Wagner seems to mean that Schiller tended to avoid plots drawn from modern life, preferring to set medieval histories in a form based on ancient tragedy, precisely because he believed, unlike Goethe, that the purity of form would bring his material closer to the ideal" (87). Pendergast provides us with the synopsis of Verdi's *Giovanna d'Arco* in pages 96 to 100. The musical aspect is given a detailed treatment and a comparison of the mode chosen for expression is also discussed: "Verdi's music for the angels, set as a soli of contraltos, is serene even as it conveys a message of admonition; it does not jar the spectator out of the action of the opera. The demons, on the other hand, sing their taunts with an involuntarily infectious glee and vibrant Italian coloration" (101). The 'beguiling' music for the demons in this portion of the Prologo "Tu sei bella" is attached along with the edition in page 102. The writer refers to three operatic conventions that Verdi employed successfully, which are all evident in *Giovanna*: (1) poetry in stanzas; (2) word-painting; and (3) the so-called *parola scenica* ("theatrical word"). Pendergast also documents the text, "T'arretti i palpiti," which successfully appropriates the theme of the opera wherein the music merges with the emotion. Further, the reference to the Soldiers' chorus for the scene in Act I in the English camp forbears the nationalistic sentiments engrained.

In chapter four, 'Patriotic Elegy and Epic Illusion: Schiller's *Johanna* in Russia', Pendergast gives prime importance to Vasily Andreevich Zhukovsky, who wrote the translation of Schiller's *Jungfrau von Orleans*, published in 1824 as "The Orleans Maid". Pendergast has brought out the quintessential classicist embedded within Zhukovsky, especially documenting the evolution of Zhukovsky the artist. The writer says there is a

clear change in the approach to the (re)presentation of Schiller's Jungfrau, when Zhukovsky handles the theme. "Arguably, in a play about a girl who believes herself to be heaven's emissary, such connotations should be appropriate, but the themes from ancient Greek tragedy, especially Euripides's *Iphigeneia* plays, with which Schiller imbued his play, become almost indiscernible in Zhukovsky's version". Further, the chapter also gives details of the policies of censorship followed in Russia. The Second part in the same chapter, 'The Genesis of Tchaikovsky's *Orleanskaya Deva* ("Maid of Orleans"), Pendergast refers to Tchaikovsky's notion of approaching the act of composing "in two distinct modes, which he referred to as compositional types (*vidy*) or categories (*razryady*)". A lot of details about his life, his failed marriage, his orientation toward homosexuality earn a mention in the chapter. *The*

Maid of Orleans, in 4 acts and 6 scenes (TH 6 ; EW 6), is Tchaikovsky's sixth completed opera, and it was composed between December 1878 and March 1879, and orchestrated between April and August 1879, with revisions in December 1880, and September-October 1882. Regarding the study of the music employed and the divergences from the original theme, Pendergast has made use of the incisive analysis made by David Brown, though the originality of the argument is very much visible. In the analysis of the musical composition from pages 202 to 215, Pendergast gives insightful comments on the sublime levels that Tchaikovsky attained with consummate ease.

The concluding section, 'The Skeptic Doth Protest Too Much, Methinks: Shaw's Saint Joan—Concluding Thoughts on Joan in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries', Pendergast takes on Shaw and his observations on the previous versions of Joan of Arc's story. To quote from the book, Shaw says "The pseudo-Shakespearean Joan ends in mere scurrility. Voltaire's mock-Homeric epic is an uproarious joke. Schiller's play is romantic flapdoodle. All the modern attempts known to me are second-rate opera books. I felt personally called on by Joan to do her dramatic justice; and I don't think I have botched the job" (237). Shaw had his own justifications about the way the play was to be staged and how people need to read the situation, be it the miracles presented, the idea of Life Force, the execution of Joan or the final part of revival of her stature. But Pendergast's insightful analysis of Shaw and his play tell us how the dramatist may not have achieved the sublime heights that the other versions had achieved in terms of their profundity and density. Just as the book has started with the biographical note, the culminating line also rings something wonderful and interesting about the writer's life: "Until that happens, readers who yearn for the memory of Jeanne may delight in her semblance and take pleasure in contemplating whether or not Iphigeneia, Johanna, Giovanna, Ioanna, and Joan are all her sisters in sublime sanctity"(265). This critical study has successfully delivered what it promised to offer at the beginning. This book surely deserves a place in the critical scholarship based on Joan of Arc.

T.R. MURALIKRISHNAN
M.E.S Asmabi College, Kodungallur, Kerala

WOMEN WRITERS OF THE SOUTH ASIAN DIASPORA: INTERPRETING GENDER, TEXTS AND CONTEXTS. By Ajay K. Chaubey and Shilpa Daithota Bhat (Eds.). Jaipur & Delhi: Rawat Publications, 2020. 264 pp.

The pluralities involved with the very construct of the body of South Asian Cultural Studies repeatedly invite critical inquiries to locate and address the gaps existing within its frame of existence. The trajectories of South Asian Studies in the post-human era offers glimpses of fluid identities intrinsically posited within its construct from which it is possible to negotiate on newer ideas or definitions of gender identity, politics of narration and several other nuanced tropes, some of which Ajay K. Chaubey and Shilpa Daithota Bhat (with a foreword by Mariam Pirbhai) in their publication, *Women Writers of the South Asian Diaspora: Interpreting Gender, Texts and Contexts* (2020), has intensely focussed on. The tradition of silencing women's voices in the name of gender as well as race has been supported by various agents and the situation only worsens when the issue of migration is involved. The trauma of displacement has timelessly affected women denying them of several things such as social position, cultural acceptance or even economic empowerment. Many social developments have contributed towards providing the female subjects their rightful voice but the struggle continues till today.

The world in spite of acquiring a global status with its ever increasing denominations of an inclusive outer structure has failed to accommodate women and refurbish them with equal rights. The world of hyper real with its idea of surplus, however, often fails to even provide the women with their basic demands. The counter image of helplessness, economic despair and emotional insecurity along with several other gaps which are intrinsically linked with the lives of South Asian women are often left unaddressed or even unvalued. While the paradigm shifts of the socio-cultural order of the world had been accredited primarily by the school of postcolonialism, the gender issues were taken into account by the postcolonial feminist school. Diaspora has always been an ever widening field of studies that has dealt with the issues of space, migration, dislocation and fissured identities. In today's academia, diaspora studies competently address the multiplicity of diasporic encounters, experiences and exchanges, gradually shifting away from the former construct of its highlighted ideological definition. This book in particular takes into consideration the women's voices echoing multiple issues connected to the broader field of diasporic studies. The editorial comment that sums up the focal point of the book that, "this book interrogates diasporic issues of transplanted individuals through the analysis of the works by South Asian women writers..." (2).

The volume, under review, categorically acknowledges the importance of recognizing the otherwise marginal voices in a growing transnational world. Battling the crisis of the homeland vs. hostland dichotomy, the editors have emphatically interrogated the politics of reading texts articulated by diasporic women writers. It has remained a fact that their spatial and geopolitical identity often has overruled their literary prowess. The identity struggle of most of the diasporic writers run parallel to their desperate attempt of negotiating their narratives along the thin lines of reality and imagination. The exploration of male characters also provide the readers with novel perspectives, allowing them a rather plural and nuanced portrayal of the gender troubles across the world at large. The

book speaks about the roaring popularity of select women writers from the Indian origin and how even within the diasporic centre of literature, there exists marginal positions for authors of other South Asian nations. These nuanced issues of diasporic women writers have been addressed competently by several authors who have contributed their essays in this book to make it a pertinent text within the academic field of diasporic studies. The book targets to puncture the silences and the voids that prevail within the readings of texts articulated by women transnational writers.

As acknowledged by the editors, it is due to the rising popularity of South Asian women writers across global academia, several texts have been identified and their issues rightfully addressed. Keeping in mind the existing plurality within South Asian literature, the book has been divided into four sections. The first section of the anthology appropriately named as 'Diasporic Women Writers from India: Critiquing Transnationalism' opens with a brilliant essay focussed on South Asian American women writers by Christiane Schlote that explores women writers such as Talat Abbasi, Meena Alexander and several others, emphasising the utmost need to develop a comparative approach to appropriate issues such as 'identity politics and pan-ethnic ideologies' (7). The issue of identity in terms of cultural citizenship is addressed by Monalisha Saikia and Rohini Mokashi-Punekar. The duo rigorously enquires into the text and the latent binaries that exist within its body, laying threadbare Mukherjee's immigrant politics while touching upon the greater problem of exoticising one's present and the past as per the requirement of one's situation, a convenient construct exploited by several other diasporic writers.

I. Watitula Longkumer and Nirmala Menon take upon the concept of ethnicity within the versatile domain of North-East literature. The cultural nuances of individual tribes, however could not be gauged sufficiently within the restricted frame of the essay. However, it does pave way for future research as it implores the reader to probe deeper into it. While Payel Ghosh offers a critique of the nuances of history when crafted through the lens of nostalgia and what is lost and found in the process of imagining the past in order to recreate within the palette of present, the last essay in this section, that has been penned by Rositta Joseph Valiyamattam focuses on the more crucial off shoot of postcolonial studies, the issue of neo-colonialism which allows the readers a scope of looking at the rapidly transforming cultural and social politics within and beyond the range of literary texts.

The second section of the book, 'Women Writers from Pakistani and Bangladeshi Diaspora: Contemporary Perspectives' comprises of five spectacular essays. Although the first two chapters critique Bapsi Sidhwa's literary works, their points of argument retain their individual readings. While the essay by Shirin Zubair focuses on the colonial representation of the Eastern female in *An American Brat*, Moncy Mathew interrogates the multiple factors that influenced the construct of the Parsi ethnic identity that struggled vis-à-vis the cultural cauldron of Pre-independent India with reference to Sidhwa's *The Crow Eaters*. Sonali Maurya in this section offers her examination of 'how one's identity is transformed from historical past to present through language and translation' (8) in reference to Kamila Shamsie's *Broken Verses*. As her overarching critical tool, she uses Homi Bhabha's theory of cultural translation but somehow fails to comment on the trope of space and time which Shamsie offers in her text. Addressing the issues of Islamic feminism as appropriated in the body of Kamila Shamsie's *Offence: The Muslim Case*, Sania Iqbal Hashmi in her chapter incisively analyses how female writing offers alternative reading of the changing dynamics of 'religious and political ideologies' (139). The next

chapter written by Sidney Shirley takes into account the issue of changing immigrant narratives over the generations by focussing on Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*.

The third section focuses on women writers from the Sri Lankan, Nepalese and Bhutanese diaspora who have been formerly overlooked by mainstream academia. It is within such a gap that Shashikala Muthumal Assella proposes her reading of Nayomi Munaweera's *Island of a Thousand Mirrors* and how it negotiates with the appropriation of separate female identities and voices in dislocated spaces. A fresh attempt at a postcolonial eco-critical reading is devised by Pallabee Dasgupta in this section as she assesses Chandani Lokugé's *Turtle Nest*. Her reading despite acknowledging the connections between the social and environmental justice, however has overlooked an opportunity of commenting on the ecoaesthetics and its much debated link with ecotourism. Tamasha Acharya tracing along the biographical lines of Roma Tearne's has initiated in her essay a beautiful take on immigrant memory and transforming experiences across three generations of Sri Lankan women. A critically crisp reading of Manjushree Thapa's *Tilled Earth* is offered by Khangendra Acharya who implores the readers to engage with the text through content analysis method with special reference to hermeneutical approach. Another text by Manjushree Thapa, *Seasons of Flight*, has been analysed beautifully by Khem Guragain where the author has analysed the challenges of an American dream that affects the immigrants and their aspirations. The last chapter articulated by Nazneen Khan rightfully sums up the third section, bringing forward a thorough critical inquiry of the rising female voice battling patriarchal resistance as developed by Kunzang Choden in *The Circle of Karma* which is also read as a gynofiction. The anthology maintains a steady academic charm and allows the reader to engage with each of the essays. The closure is offered in the final section where a few South Asian writers such as Chandani Lokugé and Manjushree Thapa are interviewed by Sissy Helff and Sally Acharya respectively, where the writers have candidly graced the interviewers and the readers with first hand critical perspectives on their respective works and the experiences that shaped them as authors.

The book indeed offers a magnificent reading of South Asian women writers but also reminds us to take into account the women poets of South Asian diaspora that has been overlooked in this anthology. However, the volume appropriately contextualize the experiences of South Asian Women's literary creations in a rather steady manner, appropriately addressing the multiplicity of themes, inviting a closer reading between the lines as well as the gaps. The anthology offers a new age relevant take on the themes, contexts, patterns and insights offered by select South Asian women writers and at its closure, successfully paves the way for future academic and research endeavours.

RITUSHREE SENGUPTA
Patrasayer Mahavidyalaya, West Bengal

K.B. GOEL: CRITICAL WRITINGS ON ART 1957-1998. By Shruti Parthasarathy (Ed). New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2020. 430+l pp.

In the introduction to her book, Parthasarathy begins by drawing attention to K.B. Goel's responses to "the avant-garde and the postmodern" (xvii). She dedicates specific sections to the discussion on Marcel DuChamp's rejection of Modernism (xxi-xxii), Cubism and Minimalism, working her way through Goel's skepticism towards the computerization of art and its subsequent ramifications that changed its traditional course (xxv). Using Walter Benjamin as a launch pad, she notes how Goel raises but refuses to answer the question on the inclusion of photography, and its contribution to art (xxxi). In the final section, she displays his gradual conservatism from earlier political tendencies by mysticizing his politically motivated criticism, referring to how his inclination for the *Ishopanishad* defined the apparent transcendental standards of Eastern art (xxxix-xl). The Book is divided into five sections. In 'Artists', Goel makes a few standard observations – how Indian painters become repetitive in their methods, lacking an experimental zeal (5), on the dispassionate nature of Jamini Roy's paintings (23), the implications of *angst* in postmodern art (in refutation of Modernism/s) (36), the manners involved in assessing Hussain's art outside the domain of "normally satisfying aesthetics" (48) and so on. Furthermore, Hussain's art becomes reminiscent of what Goel calls "ethnic memories" (58), by which I understand a memory fed by sublated ethnic constructions. F.N Souza contributes to the making of a modern day Hindu *bewusstsein* nurtured on Intuitions, although the author does not qualify which aspects of his paintings are singular and immediate. Satish Gujral exhibits the extremities of an artistic enterprise, while the author tracks a decisive lack of influence of Dada painters in Indian art. Goel makes a seminal statement when he says that "Modernism in India came as an assertion against the all-pervasive cultural nationalism as represented by the Bengal school of painters in the pre-independence period" (144) – something that is worth investigating in all its umpteen varieties. This section closes off with an attempt at critiquing photography as an aesthetic medium of experience (158-161). In 'Institutions' an important contribution of Goel could be considered his criticism of the Lalit Kala Akademi that faltered at several junctures. His solution is to educate art enthusiasts in "art-history consciousness" (173) before striving to remedy fundamental problems related with administration and funds. A historical account of Western art draws flak when "provincialisms" (180) take the upper hand. In 'Triennale-India', there are brief studies of art exhibitions across India. Here, he praises Bhupen Khakhar for the *factness* of his art (211), ending with a brief paragraph on Kitsch. In 'Art and Ideas', he studies Minimalism and the basis of its "semantic tease" (223), reverting back to improvements for the LKA, such as an "anechoic chamber" (237) which should enhance the values of aesthetic experience. Depression Years force artists to come to terms with social realities, often mitigating them from pursuing what is truly great, instead limiting themselves in exhibitions and business transactions. 'Art's distorting Mirror of Consciousness' is a reasonable explanation of every-thing argued for by Goel in this section, barring explicit references to politics. The volume culminates with essays on photography, Goel's reviews and catalogues of solo exhibitions.

While the editor must be lauded for taking upon herself a task that is the first of its kind, and while the reviewer concedes to the exclusion of ideas not directly pertaining to art criticism, two criticisms of K.B. Goel's commentary on art must not be overlooked – first, there is a decisive lack of intense philosophical, aesthetic or literary reflection, causing the reviews to be lightweight and subject to popular ignorance. Even the best of journalistic criticism is often well-written than well-argued; second, the epigrammatic nature that his writing takes refuge in functions as a bane in absence of true authenticity, missing the nail and lacking any very deep impact from without. Nevertheless, the volume will serve as an inspiration for art critics in the future.

SHOUVIK NARAYAN HORE
Vidyasagar University, India

THE DEATH SCRIPT: DREAMS AND DELUSIONS IN NAXAL COUNTRY. By Ashutosh Bhardwaj. New Delhi: Fourth Estate India/Harper Collins, 2020. 269 pp.

Already and rightly reviewed by others as a 'genre-bender' (Aditya Mani Jha, Hindu Business Line) Ashutosh Bhardwaj's *The Death Script: Dreams and Delusions in Naxal Country* is undoubtedly a striking work of non-fiction, from the pages of which, however, a fiction-writer keeps rearing his head, till the attuned-reader is left searching for the artist within his art (perhaps much to the chagrin of T S Eliot!). Yes, celebrated journalist of several years, the author, perhaps, at last, consciously seeks to break free from the inevitable trammels imposed by the reticence required of journalistic writing, to consciously cross over to the luxuries of emotional repose and stability offered by the craft of the novelist. Is it a weary bid to escape the 'corpses pinned to the tip of his fountain pen' (*DS* 240) or perhaps a final 'death script' to bury the death reporter within him, forever? Is *The Death Script* then mere reportage of Maoist-Police skirmishes, or rather the checkered journey of awakening, an internal *rites de passage* – of crossing the threshold of comforting, and comfortable, lifelong-certainties into stark realities painfully acquired? For one, *The Death Script* is a gripping narrative, with all the potential of a *künstlerroman*, ready to sprout whenever the optimum conditions prevail, and, if one may say so, even a brilliant swan song, for the purely journalistic self of the author, all blended into one.

A book in its physical, tangible avatar, even in the age of Kindle-Readers and e-books, still carries a lot of currency and meaning – as is the case with the hardcover edition of *The Death Script*. The strategically placed black pages, which separate the different sections, act as fitting palls for the legions of deaths and dead bodies that this author has been witness to, in the years of reporting from the conflict-zone in Bastar – alternately labelled India's 'Red Corridor'. One is instantly taken back to the artistry of the novel *Tristram Shandy*, the eighteenth century English masterpiece by Laurence Sterne, which threw intellectual challenges, in its own time, to its readers at critical junctures in the narrative by inserting blank or black pages, and if not thoroughly *performative* like *Tristram Shandy*,

While the editor must be lauded for taking upon herself a task that is the first of its kind, and while the reviewer concedes to the exclusion of ideas not directly pertaining to art criticism, two criticisms of K.B. Goel's commentary on art must not be overlooked – first, there is a decisive lack of intense philosophical, aesthetic or literary reflection, causing the reviews to be lightweight and subject to popular ignorance. Even the best of journalistic criticism is often well-written than well-argued; second, the epigrammatic nature that his writing takes refuge in functions as a bane in absence of true authenticity, missing the nail and lacking any very deep impact from without. Nevertheless, the volume will serve as an inspiration for art critics in the future.

SHOUVIK NARAYAN HORE
Vidyasagar University, India

THE DEATH SCRIPT: DREAMS AND DELUSIONS IN NAXAL COUNTRY. By Ashutosh Bhardwaj. New Delhi: Fourth Estate India/Harper Collins, 2020. 269 pp.

Already and rightly reviewed by others as a 'genre-bender' (Aditya Mani Jha, Hindu Business Line) Ashutosh Bhardwaj's *The Death Script: Dreams and Delusions in Naxal Country* is undoubtedly a striking work of non-fiction, from the pages of which, however, a fiction-writer keeps rearing his head, till the attuned-reader is left searching for the artist within his art (perhaps much to the chagrin of T S Eliot!). Yes, celebrated journalist of several years, the author, perhaps, at last, consciously seeks to break free from the inevitable trammels imposed by the reticence required of journalistic writing, to consciously cross over to the luxuries of emotional repose and stability offered by the craft of the novelist. Is it a weary bid to escape the 'corpses pinned to the tip of his fountain pen' (DS 240) or perhaps a final 'death script' to bury the death reporter within him, forever? Is *The Death Script* then mere reportage of Maoist-Police skirmishes, or rather the checkered journey of awakening, an internal *rites de passage* – of crossing the threshold of comforting, and comfortable, lifelong-certainties into stark realities painfully acquired? For one, *The Death Script* is a gripping narrative, with all the potential of a *künstlerroman*, ready to sprout whenever the optimum conditions prevail, and, if one may say so, even a brilliant swan song, for the purely journalistic self of the author, all blended into one.

A book in its physical, tangible avatar, even in the age of Kindle-Readers and e-books, still carries a lot of currency and meaning – as is the case with the hardcover edition of *The Death Script*. The strategically placed black pages, which separate the different sections, act as fitting palls for the legions of deaths and dead bodies that this author has been witness to, in the years of reporting from the conflict-zone in Bastar – alternately labelled India's 'Red Corridor'. One is instantly taken back to the artistry of the novel *Tristram Shandy*, the eighteenth century English masterpiece by Laurence Sterne, which threw intellectual challenges, in its own time, to its readers at critical junctures in the narrative by inserting blank or black pages, and if not thoroughly *performative* like *Tristram Shandy*,

The Death Script is, along similar lines, a veiled meditation on multiple subjects including the art of narration or story-telling! The mixing of genres, which the book effortlessly combines – from the confessional mode of diary-writing to the remembered- reticence of journalism, reminiscent almost of H.E. Bates, to the nascent saplings of novelistic prose and finally the polyphony of voices – works wonders for readers from multiple walks of life with divergent tastes and academic or professional training. Incessant churning out of literary fiction, non-fiction, and bestseller-lists (as if from Vulcan's own smithy!) in recent times, prompted by the fiercely competitive publishing industry, often leaves readers bedazzled. But it is still possible for the keen and sensitive reader to smell out a book worth their investment in time and emotional involvement, from amidst the glitz of advertising gimmicks and propaganda. *The Death Script* is one such good investment, which will not often disappoint a reader.

Though several informative and insightful books¹ have been published in the past on the Maoist insurgency in general, and specifically in Bastar, the depth, sincerity and empathy of this latest addition far surpasses that of its predecessors, marked by more distanced analyses. And for many who have been hitherto unaware of such in-depth and first-hand account of the struggles and bloodbath in the forests of Bastar, between Maoists and the Police, the book is undoubtedly going to be an eye-opener, and yet never for once force one to take sides or be judgmental. One of the earliest reviewers of this book dwells on this quicksand quality of the work – of its uncanny ability to suck the readers into its 'exorcism', almost unawares, thereby making them realize, as if with a jolt, how deeply 'implicit' they too are in this bloodbath, sold in instalments as news (Supriya Nair, Mumbai Mirror).

Divided into seven sections, preceded by a 'Pre-Text', the seven sections are in turn arranged around the pattern of abstractions and felt-realities (*dream, delusion, death script, displacement*, but not always in that order!). The book records with accuracy the four years (2011-15) of the naxalite upheavals, when Bhardwaj was posted in Bastar precisely for such reportage. The journalist-author's, life among naxals in the remotest areas of Abujhmad forest, his daily encounters with the deprivations and the idealism which drove the revolutionaries and his sense of complicity in the State's apathy to towards the marginalization of the adivasis, is woven in a fabric of facts, undistorted, though filtered through the perceptions of a city-bred man who at every point grapples with the challenges of giving voice to the dead, the voiceless and the subaltern. But, what perhaps appeals most to a literary reading in this work, are moments of subtle and unpretentious confessions ('Minutes after he (Joga) was murdered, a man deep inside me, who loves, who yearns for love, a part of that man was also murdered' 16), critiques of the limitations of the journalists' trade, the unconscious marks of fatigue that come from emotional reticence demanded of a journalist: 'A novelist may admit to it, but can a journalist ever address the reader and say, "I was always in search of sorrow. My words sought a home in the grief of others?" ' (95), and also those which fire the assumption that there is already a transition in process, perhaps imperceptibly, from the dispassionateness demanded of journalism to the involvement expected of the novelist!

The book, if one is ready to pay close enough attention, beyond its depiction of bare facts, is actually a site of remarkable composting – of the author's extensive reading on the one hand of European writers, classics and imbibing of diverse global/cultural artifacts, and on the other of his deep attachment to Hindi litterateurs as Krishna Baldev, Nirmal Verma, and others who go to make a strong bilingual writer. Each of these influences has

inextricably, and effortlessly, woven themselves into the thoughts and prose of the book organically. The influences of Calvino, Kundera, to name a few are evident at places, while the forests of Abujhmad, where '[r]eturn becomes impossible' (100) shall instantly remind one of the mysterious Hotel California where 'you can check out any time you like, but you can never leave!'

Between those folds of carefully arranged sub-sections hovering between dreams, displacements, deaths and the scripting of the deaths, the factual reports of state oppression and bloody Maoist retaliations, what stands out and remains etched as one closes the pages of this fascinating book are the silhouettes of some unforgettable characters. The sixty-two inches tall inconspicuous lady police officer 'whose voice carries the fragility of dewdrops' (53), the young working mother exiled in Varanasi whose words find momentary refuge in the audience of the author, a stark stranger (26), the unexpressed loneliness that fills the narrative at the strange disappearance of 'Tutuji' the Frog, the daughter of naxal parents, whose email id is unexpectedly and incongruously romantic ('*jaabili* ... full moon in Telugu' 227), the absolute stranger whose ritual feast the author is compelled to partake of ('feasted in the memory of a dead man' 253), Joga and his dreams of life with Varalakshmi 'in a distant city' (13). These are characters that might resurface from the depths of the author's memory, to haunt the reader for a long time afterwards, and also, perhaps, become protagonists in future tales he chooses to weave.

The Death Script is a quiet implosion, an empathetic portrayal of poverty, death, and even a paean to dangerous beauty of the uncharted forests of Abujhmad it certainly is; but above all else it is, perhaps, the manifesto of the struggles of this author to find an equipoise from the often-contentious dualities present within himself as a Journalist and a writer of fiction, of straddling two almost opposed worlds. It is also a quiet means to escape the almost morbid compulsion of finding 'sources' and 'news' in people he meets, or perhaps to hit the pause button to the incessant clatter of the death script typing itself out within him. As a proficient bilingual writer's first book in English, *The Death Script* raises the bar for contemporary Indian non-fiction, as it also challenges the accepted moulds of fiction. By all means, it is a must read for all who value courage and conscience in journalism and also for those who look for poetry in the midst of the prosaic and mundane!

Notes

¹ Other significant books on maoist insurgency, in several parts of India including Bastar that have riveted readers before this are, Anuradha Chenoy and Kamal Mitra Chenoy's *Maoist and Other Armed Conflicts*, India: Penguin, 2010; Nandini Sundar's *The Burning Forest: India's War in Bastar*, India: Juggernaut, 2016; Alpa Shah's, *Nightmarch: Among India's Revolutionary Guerillas*, London: Hurst, Chicago: University of Chicago Press; New Delhi: Harper Collins, 2019.

OINDRILA GHOSH

Diamond Harbour Women's University, Kolkata

EXPLORING GENDER DIVERSITY IN THE ANCIENT WORLD. By Allison Surtees and Jennifer Dyer. UK: Edinburgh University Press, 2020. 264 pp.

The volume *Exploring Gender Diversity in the Ancient World* challenges the heteronormative, cisgendered and masculinist readings of the ancient world by using queer, feminist and transgender studies to open up conversations about our understanding of gender diversity in classical and contemporary society. It attempts to trace and identify the varied intersections of gender identity, expression, roles, sex and sexuality with factors such as race, ethnicity, class and socio-political milieu in the Greco-Roman world. Along with re-reading popular figures of antiquity, the volume also investigates the presence of gender-diverse and transgender people, marginalised due to the politics of representation. The essays critically analyse and reinterpret classical texts, literature and material culture. The authors avoid homogenising, essentializing or universalising gender identities.

The editors Allison Surtees and Jennifer Dyer analyse the Olympian Gods Athena and Dionysus in the introduction. Athena, the goddess of strategic warfare, is assigned female at birth but assumes a male identity by opting for masculine gender expression and roles through her actions, comportment and clothing. Dionysus has an ambivalent shifting gender identity, alternating and blending male and female roles and performances. Such instances of gender fluidity among fundamental figures of the Greco-Roman world challenge and destabilize social constructions of power and hierarchy.

The volume is divided into four sections consisting of essays focussing on specific but overlapping and interconnected aspects of gender diversity. The first section titled "Gender Construction" begins with Walter Penrose discussing "female masculinity and male femininity" by establishing courage, boldness and intelligence as markers of gender diversity in the ancient world. The terms '*androgynous*' and '*kinaidos*' were often used pejoratively to refer to men who lacked courage or 'feminine men' and intersex or male-to-female transgender persons like the Enarees who were said to have the 'female disease.' The women who demonstrated courage and intelligence were seen as an anomaly and called 'masculine women' (not equated with lesbianism), like Clytemnestra, who ruled Argos in Agamemnon's absence and sought revenge on him.

Tyson Sukava's essay focuses on ancient physicians' interest in the physiognomy of the body. To simplify their understanding, they considered bodies as constituted by different proportions of fluids (blood, phlegm, yellow bile and black bile), which resulted in a spectrum of human natures between maleness and femaleness. A person's gender identity was also determined by the blending of secretions contributed by each parent in varying degrees. While such theories were influenced by socio-cultural power dynamics of gender construction, they also simultaneously acknowledged the overlapping of the male and female anatomies. Anna Uhlig reinterprets and reflects on the 'crafted' body of Pandora by analysing her "birth by hammer." She reads Pandora's composite body as a combination of 'nature' and 'artifice,' which is 'organic' and 'constructed' at the same time, thus, opening up our existing understanding of corporeal boundaries. The last essay of this section by Kelly Shannon-Henderson analyses 'real-life' incidents of sex change where women spontaneously transitioned into men and subsequently began performing male gender

roles in society. Shannon-Henderson proceeds to reveal the ancient understanding of gender categories as either male (superior) or female, where a transformed person has to belong to either of these categories instead of an intermediate one.

The second section's thematic focus is on gender fluidity. The first two essays analyse the figure of Hermaphroditus. Linnea Åshede utilises Karen Barad's posthumanist theory to reinterpret the visual representations of Hermaphroditus where she is 'surprised' by the discovery of her genitals. Hermaphroditus is perceived as "youthfully androgynous" and gender-fluid, at times "more or less woman, boy, both and neither to individual viewers" (Åshede 90). Peter Kelly analyses the fusion of the bodies of Hermaphroditus and the nymph Salmacis in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in a way that destabilizes gendered corporeal distinctions, ontological and epistemological boundaries, along with the notion of a fixed cosmological and human evolution.

Rebecca Begum-Lees explores gender fluidity in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* through the character of Iphis, who desires to marry Ianthe. Iphis is assigned female at birth, raised as a boy, and ultimately transformed into a man in order to marry a woman. Begum-Lees argues that Iphis undergoes a transformation of 'social gender' (outward and performative markers of gender) rather than 'biological sex,' indicating that his metamorphosis remains unresolved. Ze resists binary gender classification both before and after his transformation. This section ends with Jussi Rantala's analysis of Emperor Elagabalus' portrayals in the historical accounts of Cassius Dio and Herodian. The Emperor's 'controversial' religious activities and gender expression make Herodian see him as an exotic Easterner who painted his face with make-up, engaged in "laughable rituals and wore only the most expensive clothing and jewellery" (Rantala 121). Unlike Herodian, Cassius Dio condemns Elagabalus for his transgression of gender identity, which he saw as unbecoming of a true Roman.

The third section explores transgender identities in the ancient world. Dalida Agri takes up the themes of gender ambiguity, gender liminality and moral reasoning through the figure of personified Virtus in Statius' *Thebaid* and Silius' *Punica*. Since Statius and Silius are contemporaries, Agri engages in cross-reading passages from the two works to determine how one may have elaborated on the other. In the next essay, Lisa Hughes analyses the ancient visual depictions of Omphale and Hercules in Pompeian Dionysian Theatre Gardens. The theatrically staged presence of the cross-dressed pair near or in the garden areas honoured the gender-fluid deity, Dionysus. Through performative gender blending and reversal, this pair subverted conventional social and gender roles in domestic and public spheres.

Evelyn Adkins highlights the 'politics of representation' through the transgender identity of the priests of the Syrian Goddess in Apuleius' *The Golden Ass*. Adkins juxtaposes the narrator Lucius's derogatory description of the priests using male grammatical forms with the priests' own identification as female using female grammatical forms. While the priests use direct speech to assert a shared feminine gender identity, Lucius denies and misgenders their transwomen identity by reading their gender expression as proof of effeminacy. The final essay of this section by Rowan Emily Ash analyses the intersections of sex, gender, identity, class and ethnicity in Lucian's *Dialogues of the Courtesans*. The character Megillos is assigned female at birth but identifies as male and easily passes off as Megilla (female) in public. To understand his blurred gender identity, Ash interrogates his identity in the light of gender dysphoria, which is defined as "the distress that may accompany the incongruence between one's experienced or expressed gender and one's assigned gender" ([American Psychiatric Association] 2013: 451).

The fourth section consists of three essays focussing on female masculinity. Brian P. Sowers and Kimberly Passaro evaluate sexuality in the early Christian sacred texts. They examine Thecla's 'allusive and elusive gender' through biblical intertextual connections with Mary of Bethany's veneration at Jesus' feet and Ruth's seduction of Boaz. Thecla is a cross-dressing apostolic leader who abandons domestic obligations, adopts 'masculine' traits, crosses the *oikos* and travels in the public sphere. Her fluid, plural and nuanced sexual identity enables her to become an idealised disciple.

Mary Deminion examines a trio of women orators who transgressed gender boundaries by entering the male space of the Roman courtroom and effectively employing rhetoric and public oratory that otherwise excluded women. Valerius Maximus describes the orator Maesia as an *androgyne*, condemns Gaia Afrania as a monster and praises Hortensia as the living image of her illustrious father. Public speech is related to self-representation, power and patriarchal political dominance. Thus, by speaking on their own behalf, these gender non-conforming figures triggered male anxiety and Roman morality. The volume comes to an end with Denise Eileen McCoskey's insightful comparison of Artemisia's portrayals in Herodotus' *Histories* and Zack Snyder's film *300: Rise of an Empire* (2014). Herodotus represents her as a 'woman fighting,' who is outside the codes of Greek femininity and applauds her courage, *andreia* (manliness), autonomy and 'wondrous' subjectivity along with her cunning escape at the end. The film, on the other hand, creates a narrative of rape-revenge and racial otherness before casting Artemisia as an extremely violent villain to be hated by the audience. Here, it is the male protagonist who offers her an escape that she refuses, choosing a bold death in combat instead.

The volume reveals that classical Greco-Roman history is "the history of all genders" that includes gender fluid, non-binary, intersex, transgender, gender bending and blending identities (Surtees and Dyer 2). The figures discussed in these essays subvert and bend gender expectations by separating maleness and femaleness from masculinity and femininity. These ambiguous gender identities have faced various forms of subjugation, violence, objectification and erasure. Thus, by exploring varied forms of gender expression, gender identity, assigned sex, perceived sex and physical sex, the volume alters our understanding of gender diversity in the ancient as well as the contemporary world.

ANWESHA SAHOO
University of Delhi, India

A LIVING ISLAMIC CITY: FEZ AND ITS PRESERVATION. By Titus Burckhardt. Jean-Louis Michon and Joseph A. Fitzgerald (Eds.). Translated by Jane Casewit. Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, 2020, 104 pp.

The Moroccan city of Fez, founded in the ninth century, is an unparalleled treasure of Islamic culture and civilization. Titus Burckhardt (1908–1984) was an expert on Islam, Islamic arts and crafts, and its mystical dimension, Sufism. For more than forty years he worked to document and preserve the artistic and architectural heritage of Fez in particular

The fourth section consists of three essays focussing on female masculinity. Brian P. Sowers and Kimberly Passaro evaluate sexuality in the early Christian sacred texts. They examine Thecla's 'allusive and elusive gender' through biblical intertextual connections with Mary of Bethany's veneration at Jesus' feet and Ruth's seduction of Boaz. Thecla is a cross-dressing apostolic leader who abandons domestic obligations, adopts 'masculine' traits, crosses the *oikos* and travels in the public sphere. Her fluid, plural and nuanced sexual identity enables her to become an idealised disciple.

Mary Deminion examines a trio of women orators who transgressed gender boundaries by entering the male space of the Roman courtroom and effectively employing rhetoric and public oratory that otherwise excluded women. Valerius Maximus describes the orator Maesia as an *androgyne*, condemns Gaia Afrania as a monster and praises Hortensia as the living image of her illustrious father. Public speech is related to self-representation, power and patriarchal political dominance. Thus, by speaking on their own behalf, these gender non-conforming figures triggered male anxiety and Roman morality. The volume comes to an end with Denise Eileen McCoskey's insightful comparison of Artemisia's portrayals in Herodotus' *Histories* and Zack Snyder's film *300: Rise of an Empire* (2014). Herodotus represents her as a 'woman fighting,' who is outside the codes of Greek femininity and applauds her courage, *andreia* (manliness), autonomy and 'wondrous' subjectivity along with her cunning escape at the end. The film, on the other hand, creates a narrative of rape-revenge and racial otherness before casting Artemisia as an extremely violent villain to be hated by the audience. Here, it is the male protagonist who offers her an escape that she refuses, choosing a bold death in combat instead.

The volume reveals that classical Greco-Roman history is "the history of all genders" that includes gender fluid, non-binary, intersex, transgender, gender bending and blending identities (Surtees and Dyer 2). The figures discussed in these essays subvert and bend gender expectations by separating maleness and femaleness from masculinity and femininity. These ambiguous gender identities have faced various forms of subjugation, violence, objectification and erasure. Thus, by exploring varied forms of gender expression, gender identity, assigned sex, perceived sex and physical sex, the volume alters our understanding of gender diversity in the ancient as well as the contemporary world.

ANWESHA SAHOO
University of Delhi, India

A LIVING ISLAMIC CITY: FEZ AND ITS PRESERVATION. By Titus Burckhardt. Jean-Louis Michon and Joseph A. Fitzgerald (Eds.). Translated by Jane Casewit. Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, 2020, 104 pp.

The Moroccan city of Fez, founded in the ninth century, is an unparalleled treasure of Islamic culture and civilization. Titus Burckhardt (1908–1984) was an expert on Islam, Islamic arts and crafts, and its mystical dimension, Sufism. For more than forty years he worked to document and preserve the artistic and architectural heritage of Fez in particular

and Morocco in general. He is the author of numerous works, his book *Fez: City of Islam* (Fez, Stadt des Islam) first published in German in 1960 is regarded as one of his masterpieces. Burckhardt lived for many years in Fez and was an integral part of the Moroccan government's successful preservation of the ancient medina of Fez as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1981. Moreover, in 1999 the Moroccan government sponsored an international symposium in Marrakesh in honor of Burckhardt's distinguished work.

This book consists of four distinct chapters that have been refashioned from newly translated lectures, delivered while Burckhardt was living and working in Fez: "Constants of Arabo-Islamic Urbanism"; "Saving the Medina"; "Permanent Values of Maghribi Art"; and "Traditional Craftsmanship: Its Nature and Destiny"; and also contains "Appendix I: Sanctuaries of the Medina" and "Appendix II: Key Thoughts". Throughout this work Burckhardt explores how the historic city of Fez can be preserved without changing it from a living organism into a dead museum-city, and how it can be adapted and updated using the sacred principles that gave birth to the city and its way of life. Supported through photographs and sketches made during the passage of Burckhardt's lifetime, he articulates what it means to be a living Islamic city.

Burckhardt explains the magnitude of this historical city in the context of the Islamic tradition as a whole, "Fez is not only the history of Morocco, it is also the history of the Arabo-Andalusian world and ultimately of all of Muslim civilization." (p. xvii) Fundamental to this is the recognition that that "Fez is not a museum-city: it is an intensely living organism, well fitted to the measure of man" (p. 14). In contrast to most cities of the highly technological and mechanized world, which are very much dehumanizing, the old town of Fez has an intrinsic rhythm which engages the fullness of the human experience. After all it is "the *sunnah* [that] provides above all the models for practical life." (p. 3) Burckhardt elaborates on this essential principle: "The *sunnah* is 'realistic' in the sense that it always envisages the integral nature of man, who is at once body, soul, and spirit—bodily gestures having their repercussion in the soul and spiritual convictions being reflected in outward behavior." (p. 3) In fact, Burckhardt, claimed that "No other city in the entire Arab world manifests so homogenously what one could call Islamic urbanism." (p. 17) To preserve the city of Fez's irreplaceable monuments and essential characteristics requires respect for the city's historical structure. As Burckhardt points out, "adaptation necessarily involves modernization but, at the same time, it must be inspired not by European [or other] models but by what we might describe as the urbanism inherent in the ancient structure of the city." (p. 14) Burckhardt's intention is not to deny that certain contemporary developments could be of benefit here but to emphasize the need to situate any such developments within the traditional norms of the culture. Within the Islamic tradition, cultural norms are rooted in Divine Unity, as Burckhardt acknowledges when he insists "Everything, in the art of Islam, is attached to *tawhīd*." (p. 46) This is exemplified by the symbolism of light as indicated in the Koran: "God is the Light of the heavens and the earth" (24:35). Within Sufism, this symbolism of the Divine Light is also employed to demonstrate the Divine Unity that encompasses all of the spiritual paths by which diverse human souls travel back to God. The Sufi sage and poet Rūmī (1207–1273) says, for example, "The Lamps are different, but the Light is the same,"¹ further specifying that "[all] religions are but one religion."² This unity is palpable throughout the city as Burckhardt writes, "All in all, what strikes the visitor of the numerous sanctuaries in Fez is not so much the diversity of the architectural types as their unity throughout the centuries." (p. 62)

The human being engages in the creative act of making art yet remains anonymous in this act for it is not actually he or she that produces the art but the Divine. "In its state of perfection, 'each thing praises its creator,' and this creator is not the artist, but God." (p. 51) The function of the human being is to undergo a transfiguration through the creative process where he or she dissolves into the Divine Essence. The human being consists of a tripartite composite of Spirit/Intellect, soul and body, known in Islam as *Rūḥ* ('*Aql*), *nafs* and *jism*. As Burckhardt explains, "man is still at once body, soul, and spirit. One cannot, therefore, neglect any one of these modalities without harming the entire human being." (p. xix) Through this metaphysical rendering human diversity can be discerned to include both commonality and uniqueness in the Divine without contradiction: "On the one hand, all men are equal before God.... On the other hand, each man...is unique in his inner nature, and it is in this transcendent uniqueness that his liberty and dignity reside." (p. 14)

As is the case with all traditional art, "there is no profane art in the framework of Islamic civilization, which admits of no scission between the domains of the 'sacred' and the 'profane'" (p. 34). This is to say that: "In all traditional civilizations, art is never disassociated from its practical goal, and craftsmanship is never limited to a production deprived of beauty." (p. 34) The meaning of beauty and its spiritual dimension is illustrated in the Prophetic tradition: "Verily, God is beautiful and He loveth beauty." The role of the outer world in traditional societies and civilizations is central as it is interconnected and an extension of the inner world, joining both the microcosm and the macrocosm. Burckhardt notes, "What our ancestors put into the forms of their environment, this acts anew upon us, their heirs; there is nothing that exercises a greater influence on a man's soul than the environment which surrounds him." (p. xviii) This metaphysical approach also facilitates an integral ecological vision, which is found across the distinct cultures, "Water is the foundation of all life" and adds, "Water is necessary for the body, soul, and spirit alike, and nothing could better illustrate the principle of traditional town-planning than this triple use of water." (p. 7) According to the Koran: "From water We made every living thing" (21:30). The principle of unity in Islamic civilization maintains a balance between the practical and the beautiful, without diminishing either of these facets. Burckhardt warns about the harmful consequences of art, architecture and crafts when dissociated from the sacred, "When quantity dominates production, quality is killed — this is an inexorable law." (p. 50)

The protection and preservation of all cultural treasures the world over is needed, not only the city of Fez, as once they are lost, they can never be recovered. Burckhardt writes, "certain perfect creations of the human spirit cannot be repeated, and are never replaced; and yet, these works belong to man, to all of mankind—they are like aspects of our soul," he continues, "They are ours to the extent that we grasp their beauty and perfection. Were they to disappear, something of our own soul would vanish; something of ourselves would be forgotten." (p. xviii)

This book is far from a blind or superficial call for a "return to the Middle Ages," but rather a call for a return to the sacred principles that underlie all sapiential traditions and arts, crafts, architecture and sacred lifeways to understand them in their integral nature. We are grateful that these important lectures have been made available as they make for a superb contribution to Burckhardt's already published work on the city of Fez and Islamic art. Burckhardt concludes with a message conveying the transpersonal blessing crystalized within this sacred city, "let us not forget that there still exists in Fez

what we would call a *genius loci*, or, more adequately, a *barakah* that will have the last word.” (p. 14) We end this review with the well-known verse of the Islamic tradition: “Unto God all things are returned” (3:109).

Notes

¹ Rūmī, “The One True Light,” in *Rūmī: Poet and Mystic*, trans. Reynold A. Nicholson (London, UK: George Allan and Unwin, 1950), p. 166.

² Rūmī, “2120 – Book III,” in *The Mathnawī of Jalālu’d-dīn Rūmī, Vol. IV*, trans. Reynold A. Nicholson (London, UK: Luzac and Company, 1930), p. 118.

SAMUEL BENDECK SOTILLOS
California, USA

THE UNHINDERED PATH: RUMINATIONS ON SHIN BUDDHISM. By John Paraskevopoulos. Kettering, OH: Sophia Perennis, 2016, 252 pp.

“Buddha-nature is *Tathāgata* ... *Tathāgata* is *Nirvāna* ... *Nirvāna* is called Buddha-nature.”
–Shinran (quoted in the book)

In these exceptionally uncertain and confusing times, making sense of the human condition and what it means to live in this world becomes particularly challenging. By honestly confronting this predicament, it soon becomes apparent that the solution lies in a reality that transcends the limited sphere of human doubt and confusion. This requires embarking on one of the time-worn paths of the world’s traditional religions. In doing so, direct knowing, healing and integration becomes possible. This work exposes modern audiences to the wisdom of the little-known *Jōdo Shinshu* school of Buddhism (the largest in Japan) that was founded by Shinran (1173–1263).

A major difficulty that all religions face today is the secular undermining of anything that pertains to a transcendent order of existence. Paraskevopoulos writes, “We live in a world where higher truths are reduced to lower ones, where everything is considered subjective and relative, and where the notion of anything being absolute is dismissed as naïve.” (p. 19) He goes on to ask: “How can even the notion of truth be conceivable when the very thing that makes it possible, namely objective reality, is declared to be a fiction?” (p. 19) This describes the post-truth era that we currently inhabit bereft, as it is, of any signpost to what is ‘true and real’ as Shinran would say.

The Buddhist tradition asks us to deeply ponder the meaning of our enigmatic existence. A paradoxical feature of the human condition is the seeking of permanence in a world that is transitory, yet the more firmly we hold on to what is ephemeral, the more it fades away before our eyes. And yet, even if we acknowledge this truth, we nevertheless frantically aim — albeit in vain — to keep the ‘restless winds of impermanence’ at bay. No matter how insulated and engineered our personal or collective bubbles become, there is no escape from this sobering fact about our lives. It is through the world’s religions that

what we would call a *genius loci*, or, more adequately, a *barakah* that will have the last word.” (p. 14) We end this review with the well-known verse of the Islamic tradition: “Unto God all things are returned” (3:109).

Notes

¹ Rūmī, “The One True Light,” in *Rūmī: Poet and Mystic*, trans. Reynold A. Nicholson (London, UK: George Allan and Unwin, 1950), p. 166.

² Rūmī, “2120 – Book III,” in *The Mathnawī of Jalālu’d-dīn Rūmī, Vol. IV*, trans. Reynold A. Nicholson (London, UK: Luzac and Company, 1930), p. 118.

SAMUEL BENDECK SOTILLOS
California, USA

THE UNHINDERED PATH: RUMINATIONS ON SHIN BUDDHISM. By John Paraskevopoulos. Kettering, OH: Sophia Perennis, 2016, 252 pp.

“Buddha-nature is *Tathāgata* ... *Tathāgata* is *Nirvāna* ... *Nirvāna* is called Buddha-nature.”
–Shinran (quoted in the book)

In these exceptionally uncertain and confusing times, making sense of the human condition and what it means to live in this world becomes particularly challenging. By honestly confronting this predicament, it soon becomes apparent that the solution lies in a reality that transcends the limited sphere of human doubt and confusion. This requires embarking on one of the time-worn paths of the world’s traditional religions. In doing so, direct knowing, healing and integration becomes possible. This work exposes modern audiences to the wisdom of the little-known *Jōdo Shinshu* school of Buddhism (the largest in Japan) that was founded by Shinran (1173–1263).

A major difficulty that all religions face today is the secular undermining of anything that pertains to a transcendent order of existence. Paraskevopoulos writes, “We live in a world where higher truths are reduced to lower ones, where everything is considered subjective and relative, and where the notion of anything being absolute is dismissed as naïve.” (p. 19) He goes on to ask: “How can even the notion of truth be conceivable when the very thing that makes it possible, namely objective reality, is declared to be a fiction?” (p. 19) This describes the post-truth era that we currently inhabit bereft, as it is, of any signpost to what is ‘true and real’ as Shinran would say.

The Buddhist tradition asks us to deeply ponder the meaning of our enigmatic existence. A paradoxical feature of the human condition is the seeking of permanence in a world that is transitory, yet the more firmly we hold on to what is ephemeral, the more it fades away before our eyes. And yet, even if we acknowledge this truth, we nevertheless frantically aim — albeit in vain — to keep the ‘restless winds of impermanence’ at bay. No matter how insulated and engineered our personal or collective bubbles become, there is no escape from this sobering fact about our lives. It is through the world’s religions that

we can take refuge in what transcends all change and dissatisfaction, as Paraskevopoulos points out: "The spiritual traditions of the world have, each in their own way, endeavoured to provide some kind of anchor to keep us rooted in what is, otherwise, a world of shifting sands." (p. 85)

Many are drawn to Buddhism because of its focus on the mind, yet it would be a grave error to reduce it to what we understand today as the secular discipline of modern psychology. Buddhist psychology, like all forms of traditional wisdom, is rooted in sacred science, metaphysics and spiritual principles. For this reason, it is not only able to accurately diagnose our fallen or *samsāric* nature, but to treat it. The Buddha, who was often described as a 'great physician' in that he dispensed the necessary 'medicine' for our ailing condition, taught that we had a deeply flawed view of human identity. Rather than viewing our everyday 'self' as an immutable reality that has any solidity, he described our human constitution as a bundle (*skandhas*) of conditioned and unstable elements comprising form, perception, feeling, volition and consciousness.

Because of our inability to discern the transpersonal dimension comprising our true identity, we cling to the empirical personality as our real self. Paraskevopoulos writes, "The many wounds we bear in our hearts are a sign of our radical incompleteness as human beings." (p. 9) Furthermore, "much of our suffering can be found within us ... [in] our own prejudices and false impressions that provide the fuel for sustaining our endless anxieties." (p. 66) At the same time, Buddhism upholds that, ultimately, "We are made for happiness." (p. 16)

Within the Buddhist tradition, we find the doctrine of *mappō* or "the Decadent Age of the Dharma." Paraskevopoulos notes that "we are living in an age where spiritual life is undergoing a gradual debasement." (p. 71) In light of this decline, the author shows how "Shin Buddhism is uniquely placed to offer a compelling antidote to the spiritual malaise that afflicts us today and how it is exceptionally suited to give ordinary people the inner resources to confront a world where the 'three poisons' of greed, anger and ignorance are rampant." (p. 85) He goes on to say that "the Pure Land is an *upāya* (or 'saving means') for conveying the inconceivable nature of enlightenment through forms that are immediately accessible and deeply attractive to us." (p. 30)

A common misunderstanding of Buddhism is that it denies the idea of an Absolute; however, this is not the case. Paraskevopoulos reminds us that "Buddhism does not abandon the notion of an ultimate reality but refines and strips it of many of the troubling limitations that so bedevil certain theistic notions of God." (p. 91) Elsewhere he has written, "Buddhism speaks of an ultimate reality to which it gives many names." (p. 17) For example, "The Dharma-Body [*Dharmakāya*] is described in the sūtras as being the true and eternal reality behind all things." (p. 18) The Buddha teaches:

The Dharma-Body [*Dharmakāya*] is the substance of the Dharma; that is, of the Truth itself. In the aspect of Essence, Buddha has no shape or colour and, since Buddha has no shape or colour, he comes from nowhere and there is nowhere for him to go. Like the blue sky, he arches over everything, and since he is all things, he lacks nothing. (p. 202)

It is fitting here to add that explanations of Nirvāna that suggest any kind of "extinction" are largely inaccurate, as what is actually extinguished are the burdensome impediments separating us from the Dharma-Body. Regarding this reality, the *Vijñānamātra Sāstra* emphasizes both its transcendent and immanent aspects: "Absolute Nirvāna is synonymous with the Dharmakāya.... Though it manifests itself in the world of defilement

and relativity, its essence remains forever undefiled.... It is universally present in all beings" (p. 208). According to Shinran, "When a person becomes enlightened, we say they 'return to the city of Dharma-nature.'" (p. 125)

The name of Amida Buddha (or Amitābha in the original Sanskrit) is regarded as synonymous with the Buddha's reality. The spiritual antidote in this age of decline in Shin Buddhism is the *nembutsu* or saying Amida's name—*Namo Amida Butsu*. The *nembutsu* is itself a response to "hearing the Name" (understood as the Buddha's initial 'calling' to us) which is also an embodiment of the awakening of faith. The Australian poet Harold Stewart (1916–1995) makes a noteworthy point about the integral role of faith in the Buddhist tradition: "What most Western books about Buddhism fail to mention is that none of the spiritual and psycho-physical practices of the Hinayāna, Mahāyāna or Vajrayāna is going to prove effective if the indispensable prerequisite of Faith is wanting." He goes on to say that "We may abide by all the moral precepts and monastic regulations, recite the sūtras and perform the rituals, practice *zazen* and repeat the nembutsu, but, if Faith is lacking, no Deliverance or Enlightenment will result." (p. 226)

In Shin Buddhism, the Name is considered to be a vehicle for going beyond "birth and death" (*samsāra*), as it is regarded as the highest truth, which is none other than absolute Suchness itself. Invoking the *nembutsu* is to say, "I take refuge in the Infinite." (p. 155) The Buddha understands our plight in this world and longs to deliver us from it: "The Primal Vow corresponds to our deepest desire for an existence without pain, suffering and unawareness; something which is not possible in our world of *samsāra*." (p. 34) It needs to be stressed that it is not simply the mere recitation of the Name that is sufficient; the true *nembutsu* reflects Amida's working in our hearts which evokes a deep longing to be born in the Pure Land. Likewise, it is incorrect to view Other-Power as meaning "no effort." While it is true that through our own endeavours alone we cannot attain enlightenment, this does not mean that there is nothing for us to do in a spiritual sense—at the very least, we are expected to surrender ourselves to the compassionate light and life of Amida so that we may be transformed by the Buddha's wisdom.

This is a remarkable book which ought to be of great interest to those interested in a very different approach to Buddhist practice and enlightenment. It provides a rich, profound and yet very personal glimpse into this important but largely neglected tradition in the West. In this topsy-turvy age that is starkly dehumanizing and anti-spiritual, we are reminded that the everlasting peace and happiness of the 'Other Shore' is not to be attained through misguided utopian schemes of worldly perfection but by taking refuge in that which is 'true and real'. As Paraskevopoulos insightfully asserts: "It is not for the Dharma to conform to the world but for the world to conform to the Dharma." (p. 124) By way of highlighting another important dimension of the Buddhist faith, we conclude with the words of Kūkai (774–835), the great master of the Shingon school, who once declared: "Everything that is beautiful partakes of the Buddha." (p. 148)

SAMUEL BENDECK SOTILLOS
California, USA

JOURNALS RECEIVED

British Journal of Aesthetics, Comparative Literature, New Literary History, Poetics Today, Philosophy and Literature, Critical Inquiry, Journal of Modern Literature, The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism

The "Journal of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics" (ISSN: 0252-8169) is a quarterly peer-reviewed academic journal published by Vishvanatha Kaviraja Institute of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics, India since 1977. The Institute was founded by Prof. Ananta Charan Sukla (1942-2020) on 22 August 1977 coinciding with the birth centenary of renowned philosopher, aesthetician, and historian of Indian art, Ananda K. Coomaraswamy (1877-1947) to promote interdisciplinary studies and research in comparative literature, aesthetics, philosophy, literary theory and criticism, art history, criticism of the arts, and history of ideas. ("Vishvanatha Kaviraja", most widely known for his masterpiece in aesthetics, 'Sahityadarpana' or the "Mirror of Composition", was a prolific 14th-century Indian scholar, poetician, and rhetorician.)

The Journal has published the finest of essays by authors of global renown like Rene Wellek, Harold Osborne, John Hospers, John Fisher, Murray Krieger, Martin Bocco, Remo Ceserani, J.B. Vickery, Menachem Brinker, Milton Snoeyenbos, Mary Wiseman, Ronald Roblin, T.R. Martland, S.C. Sengupta, K.R.S. Iyengar, V.K. Chari, Charles Altieri, Martin Jay, Jonathan Culler, Richard Shusterman, Robert Kraut, T.J. Diffey, T.R. Quigley, R.B. Palmer, Keith Keating, and many others. It also publishes special issues on critical theories of current interest and contemporary relevance.

JCLA is indexed and abstracted in the MLA International Bibliography, Master List of Periodicals (USA), Ulrich's Directory of Periodicals, ERIH PLUS, The Philosopher's Index, WorldCat Directory, ACLA, EBSCO, ProQuest (Arts Premium Collection; Art, Design & Architecture Collection; Arts & Humanities Database; Literature Online – Full Text Journals; India Database; ProQuest Central; ProQuest Central Essentials; ProQuest Central Basic – Korea), Gale (Cengage Learning), Academic Resource Index, PhilPapers, Indian Documentation Service, Book Review Index Plus, OCLC, Periodicals Index Online, United States Library of Congress, and the British Library. The journal is also indexed in numerous university (central) libraries, state and public libraries, and scholarly organizations/ learned societies databases.

Celebrated scholars of the time like Rene Wellek, Harold Osborne, Mircea Eliade, Monroe Beardsley, John Hospers, John Fisher, Meyer Abrams, John Boulton, and many renowned foreign and Indian scholars were Members of its Editorial Board.

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO A SUSTAINING FUND

The *Journal of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics* is the official organ of Vishvanatha Kaviraja Institute, India, registered under the Societies Registration Act No. XXI of 1860 (No. 13094/2030 of 1977-78). All contributions, institutional or individual, to the sustaining fund will be gratefully acknowledged. Voluntary donations to the Institute are deductible from income tax returns under Section 80-G of the Income Tax Act, 1961 as the Journal is a non-profit academic publication. Advertising space in the Journal (limited to material of scholarly interest to our readers) is also available.

SUBMISSION AND SUBSCRIPTION

All communications in this regard are to be mailed to jclaindia@gmail.com.
For details, visit our website www.jcla.in.

FORTHCOMING SPECIAL ISSUES

- Indian Writing in English: Perspectives on the Plural Nationspace
- Philosophical Engagements with Cinema
- Immaterial and Material Discourse
- Musical Aesthetics: Historical and Contemporary Issues
- (Con)textual Strategies: Understanding and Interpretation
- Telling Lives, Signifying Selves: Life Writing, Representation, and Identity
- Untranslatability: Theory, Practice and Politics